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SOCCER

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WEEKLY

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**Stars of 99
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**Marconi Youth
in Viareggio**

**Glory Smash Six
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SOCCER WEEKLY

AUSSIE & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

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"AND THE WINNER IS ... FOOTBALL!"

By Bonnie Mersiades

The NSW Minister for the Olympics, Michael Knight, announced that football will take centre stage for the official opening of the Olympic Stadium at Sydney's Homebush Bay on Saturday 12 June 1999.

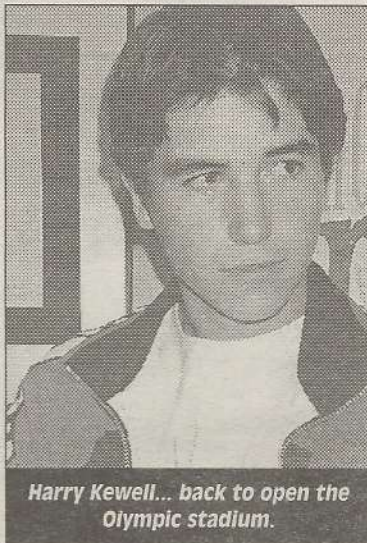
"To open this great Stadium, we have to find an event which befits this excellence," said Knight announcing the opening event between Australia and the FIFA All Stars.

As well as the football match, there will be an opening ceremony and a parade of past Olympic champions in the four-hour extravaganza.

"Because of the timing, at the end of the European season, all of the best stars are available. We look forward to seeing players like Ronaldo, Christian Vieri, Zinedine Zidane and Michael Owen."

Knight was not able to comment on who would officially open the Stadium.

Accompanied by Soccer Australia Chairman, Basil Scarsella, Stadium Australia Chief Executive, Chris Chapman, and Left Field Solutions Managing Director, Graham Halblush, Knight said that one of his priorities at the earth-turning ceremony for the Olympic Stadium in September 1996 was to ensure that the Stadium was not a 'white elephant'.



Harry Kewell... back to open the Olympic stadium.

"Sydney and Australia has a great Stadium which will not only be used for the Olympics and the Paralympics, but will also be suitable for soccer, rugby league, rugby union, AFL, American football and even one-day cricket."

Knight said that he had visited some of the great stadia in the world, including the Stade de France, the Atlanta, Barcelona and Seoul Olympics stadiums and others in Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok.

"They are great stadiums. We have an

even greater one," he said.

The Soccer Australia chief echoed this view, describing the Stadium as "a great facility" and one that, along with the MCG, will be important to Australian football followers in the years to come.

"This is a great opportunity for Australian football to wipe the memory of November 1997," said Scarsella.

"Other than the Confederations Cup, that was our last substantial game and certainly the last one played in Australia.

"It will give all our players, and all the fans, a chance to show our best to the world."

Caretaker coach, Raul Blanco, will be in charge for the game and will be pitted against World Cup winning coach, Aime Jacquet of France.

"This shows the level of commitment FIFA has to this game," Scarsella said.

"FIFA would not put their name to a team without wanting to put their best possible team forward. The chance of seeing players like Ronaldo, Zidane, (George) Weah and others playing together will excite the imagination of all football fans and we in Australia are very fortunate."

Christian Vieri, the Italian World Cup star who spent some of his formative years in Sydney with father, Roberto, when he was coach of Marconi, is expected to be a FIFA 'ambassador' for the All Stars team.

To emphasise the importance FIFA places in their FIFA All Stars' teams, Stadium Australia's Chris Chapman, noted that the last game played by an All Stars team was to celebrate the Centenary of the Italian Football League.

"The training squad will be announced at the end of February, and the final squad at the end of April," added Chapman.

Scarsella is confident that all Australian players will be available for the game. He said that Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka have already expressed their intention of being available for the match, if selected, and others are expected to follow suit.

"For one, it's their off-season; but two and more importantly, it will be a match not to be missed for anyone."

While Blanco will be in charge, Scarsella said that some of the younger coaches in the NSL will be given an opportunity to have an involvement in the game.

"We want to give the younger coaches an opportunity at every turn.

We'd like to get them involved in the World Youth Cup in Nigeria, but they are all occupied with their club sides in April when the tournament is being played."

He said that Soccer Australia is currently negotiating with Brazil, Scotland and Holland for games over the next twelve months as part of the 2002 campaign.

"This match on 12 June will be the start of the 2002 campaign, and we want to go on with it."

He said that FIFA is to consider a submission from Soccer Australia next month on the qualifying path for the 2002 World Cup.

"My preference is for a direct path

through Oceania as we are now a full Confederation.

Regardless of the qualifying path, our bottom-line is that we want to go through a full qualifying round."

Scarsella made the point that Australia didn't lose a game in the last World Cup qualifiers and didn't make it, whereas others lost several games (such as Iran) and made it.

"I hope FIFA can see the unfairness of such a system," he said.

Tickets are now on sale through Ticketek.

MATILDAS' CHOICE DRAW

Matildas' National Coach Greg Brown is quite happy with Australia's draw for the World Cup finals in the USA, June-July 1999, announced overnight.

The Matildas have been drawn in Group D alongside Olympic silver medalists China, highly-rated European side Sweden, and World Cup debutante Ghana.

Australia defeated superpower China in the final of the Tri-Nations Series in Canberra in November 1997, and in the opening match of the European Tour in August earlier that year, the Matildas beat Sweden 1-0.

Upon hearing the eagerly awaited news, Brown said, "I think it's a reasonably good draw for us. Obviously China and Sweden are two very good teams, but we're comfortable with that, as we've already beaten both of them. With Ghana obviously the weakest side, we stand a very good chance of making it through to the next round (the quarterfinals)."

Brown was also happy with the actual scheduling, the Matildas playing Ghana, then Sweden and then China.

"We play Ghana the easiest game first which will give us a lot of confidence, and then take on Sweden after they will have had a pretty tough game against China over in San Francisco, on the other side of the country."

All Australia's group matches are on the east coast, a much easier travel itinerary than the others in the group.

Group D quarterfinals are against Group C which is headed by Norway but includes the much easier nations Japan, Canada, and Russia. The Aussies will be aiming to finish top of Group D, in order to avoid defending champions Norway and take on the second-placed team.

MATILDAS' WORLD CUP DATES WITH DESTINY

Sun 20 June	4.00pm	Australia v Ghana	Foxboro Stadium, Boston
Wed 23 June	8.30pm	Australia v Sweden	Jack Kent Cooke Stadium, Washington DC
Sat 26 June	2.30pm	China v Australia	Giants Stadium, New York



Matilda defender Sonia Gegenhuber



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Australian News

STRIKERS STICKING TOGETHER THIS YEAR

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers' surge into top six contention has been built on the philosophy of fighting and sticking together. Even after the 6-0 loss on the weekend the squad is buoyant and ready to bounce back.

Ravaged by injuries and suspensions in the first half of the season, the Strikers earned much criticism after a series of late goals cost the club victory in several key matches.

While the club was slipping down the ladder after a bright start to the season, the side's young players stepped up to be counted and haven't let coach John Kosmina down.

With Sean Cranney, Chay Hews and Andy Harper due to return from injury, players such as Shane Stefanutto, Andrew Davidson, Des Hughes, Jade North, Reece Tollenare and Wayne Srhoj are suddenly making names for themselves.

Kosmina has always believed in his side and never lost the faith.

"A lot of people have been surprised at how we're going of late," he said.

"I said when I came here this was a team with potential.

"But they've shown even more character than even I thought they had.

"I knew they had the potential and the spirit to succeed and it's pleasing they are now getting some joy after coping a bit (of criticism) in the first half of the season."

The Strikers' finals claims were questioned after they lost games to South Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide City giving up goals in the final minutes.

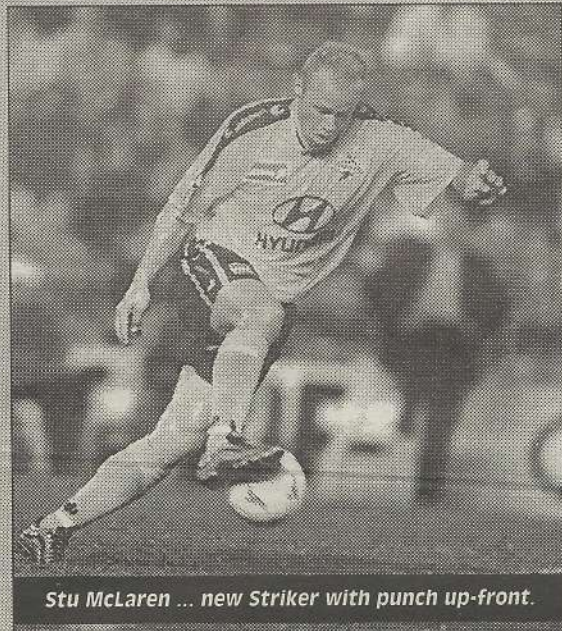
"The guys have learnt that if you stick together and keeping fighting things do get better," Kosmina said.

"They now believe in themselves both as individuals and as a team."

Meanwhile the Strikers met with representatives of English Premier League club Blackburn Rovers with a view of forming a sister club relationship.

Strikers chairman Ian Brusasco welcomed the interest shown by the prestigious English club.

"It's too early to say what the outcome will be but we are looking forward to a possible exchange of coaching ideas and perhaps players," he said.



Stu McLaren ... new Striker with punch up-front.

Just as Northern Spirit have a phone number for live calls of away games, the Strikers are now embracing technology, thus allowing their Internet site to be manned for supporters to gain info on how the side is doing away from home.

Director of Marketing For Brisbane, Richard Zammit believes that keeping the fans up to date in the teams quest for the finals is especially important during the away games.

"Today's technologies allow us to keep our supporters more informed about what we're doing than ever before."

"As Queensland's own team in the National Soccer League, we see improving the way our fans can stay part of the action with us at away games, as part of our responsibility to them for their loyal attendance at home games," said Zammit.

The Strikers are going to trial the initiative and see how well its fans respond. Club management has indicated that real time updates for away games may become an ongoing feature of their web site if fans indicate an interest in the site.

For anybody who is interested in checking out the Brisbane Strikers web site and also keep up to date with the teams progression towards the finals, the address is <http://www.brisbanestrikers.com>.

SPIRIT MODELS NEW SPONSOR

Northern Spirit have certainly 'styled-up' the Ericsson Cup. Big crowds, glamour players and massive media support puts them in the top two of clubs in Australia. And now, with yet another sponsor, they can truly say they have style even off the park.

The successful trend at the Spirit is set to continue with the announcement that the internationally famous fashion label, *Guess* has joined forces with the club to outfit the players and continue their image as professional sportsmen.

Northern Spirit Chairman, Remo Nogarotto, said the deal between Northern Spirit and Guess was the ideal way for the Spirit to illustrate its commitment to adding style and glamour to Australian Soccer.

"We have set out to market ourselves as a club going places, moving forward and this sponsorship by Guess gives our attempts to add style to the game an obvious presence," said Nogarotto.

The partnership with Guess goes hand in hand with the Spirit's attempt to appeal to the youth in Australia with both style and image that the club is portraying both on the field and off it.

"The confident, young and sophisticated image of Guess fits perfectly with the style and youth of the Northern Spirit," said Guess brand Manager, Heather Herring.



Guess who? Spirit's fashion models (l to r) Mike Cunico, Paul Bilokapic, Phil 'The Boss' Moss, 'Hendo' and Clayton Zane.

"We look forward to the Spirit continuing to run hot on the field as we know they will look very cool off it."

"Guess is a leading International fashion label and we are pleased to have them on board as sponsors of the Northern Spirit," said Nogarotto.

Spirit recently signed G3 communications and has a 1900 number for fans wanting to catch up with their progress during interstate game.

Meanwhile never let it be said that Zoran Matic does not hide a funny side. When asked about his side's chances before the weekend Melbourne Knights game, the Zebra supremo was quoted as saying "The trip to Melbourne will be a Hard Day's Knight." Zoran, that's why you are number one with us! See all the Ericsson Cup of Life from page 11...

NEXT WEEK

**THE FOUR DIEGOS GO INSIDE
BLACKBURN ROVERS WITH
SOCCEROO KEEPER
JUMPIN' JOHN FILAN**

GLORY STRIKES DEAL WITH WA CLUBS

Perth Glory may just have solved the problem of squad players needing match practice.

All Glory players will have dual registration — with Soccer Australia and Soccer West Coast — enabling them to play in the Ericsson Cup and local State competitions, including the current Inter Security night series, the winter premier league championship and the Boral Knockout Cup.

The local WA premier league clubs are expected to rubber stamp the proposal and the first draft will be carried out shortly.

The deal has been approved by Soccer Australia and WA will be the only State in the country with such an arrangement.

The lowest placed, or newly promoted team — in this case newcomer Ashfield-Bunbury — will have first choice, picking any one of the Glory's 23 players. The next lowest club will have next choice and the others will follow in ascending order.

The players will only be released to play at local level if they are not chosen in the Glory squad, or if they are recovering from injury. The agreement will run until the end of May and start up again on

October 1.

"This will benefit the younger players in our squad who don't get a regular run and need match practice," Glory coach Bernd Stange said to the Perth media.

"We do not have a reserve team, so it is a really good arrangement."

There will be no expense involved for SWC clubs. The Glory will continue to pay the wages of its players and will also make a contribution towards SWC's administration costs.

It is believed that not all of the

12 SWC clubs will participate in the draft, meaning up to three or four players could be aligned to one club.

"We understand some may not wish to change their line-ups to accommodate Glory players, but we are confident it will be a boon to many clubs," Glory general manager Roger Lefort said.



"Even if some of the star players who are aligned to certain clubs don't get a chance to play for them, it will still be of benefit. The players will be available to do coaching clinics and attend club presentation nights."

A new draft will be held each year.

Any player who is red-carded will be suspended from playing in both the Ericsson Cup and SWC events, but yellow cards will only apply to the competition they are incurred in.

In other Glory news (!), Con Boutsianis has apparently had a Mohawk haircut, but after coach Stange gave him a questioning look, he changed it to a shaved cut for the Brisbane Strikers game.

Must have worked!

Meanwhile, back in Sydney and fans can meet the stars from Sydney United by going to Grace Bros City store (level 4 sports dept), tomorrow (Wed 17 Feb) between 1 and 2pm. Meet the 'kingmaker' Dave Mitchell, and Olyroo stars 'Magic' Mile Sterjovski and Jacob Burns. There will be Sydney Utd giveaways. The store also has a Marconi special currently running.

And in the Sydney Challenge ... Northern Spirit are officially the best team in Sydney after the last round of Sydney Challenge matches on the weekend.

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Australian News

COACHING SELECTION NEEDS A REVIEW

By Les Murray

Many may have been surprised that so many 'name' coaches have knocked back the England job or at least said they would not consider it.

Kevin Keegan, Bryan Robson, Alex Ferguson, Arsene Wenger, Gerard Houllier etcetera. Are they arrogant spoilt men for being so precious as to knock back that country's biggest honour?

Me thinks not. Why, after all, would you want the damn job? You won't win the World Cup or even the European Championship because England, as it must be clear, is not good enough to win either.

And if you don't win the big titles you will be regarded as an abject failure, to be hind and quartered by the English media at every turn. And all that for money that doesn't compare to what you'd get at any decent club.

The ones whose names were mentioned and who didn't say no at the outset were men who were out of a job anyway, like Howard Wilkinson and Roy Hodgson. And Terry Venables.

So England now finds itself in a worrying Catch 22. All coaches know that the expectations for England are way out of proportion with its capabilities and as such very few quality coaches, who actually think before they expect a job, don't want to be England coach.

That being said, I don't believe Glen Hoddle was the right man for it anyway and, in truth, he should have been fired after the World Cup.

It was entirely due to his narrowminded and primitive selection choices that England failed to win its group which, in turn, may have given them a better draw in the later stages.

I don't think they would have won the World Cup but maybe they would have made the semis, as they did in 1990.

Croatia, whom England would have met in phase two if they had won their group, did and finished with the bronze medal.

So Hoddle's exit was not wrong. It was just late and maybe too late for the need to salvage England's tottering Euro 2000 campaign. A win at Wembley against group leaders Poland in a few weeks is a must otherwise England, surely, is gone.

Not that one can disagree with the English FA's

decision to untie the knot with Hoddle for his dumb indiscretions either. Football and its high profile people are often role models for humanity.

And someone who so flippantly insults those who suffer from handicaps has no place in football. He was not misquoted and he was not taken out of context. He was a wreckless, insensitive fool and he had to go.

Of course choosing the wrong coach is a common malady among administrators who, after all, know little about football yet are charged with the duty of appointing someone who does.

How such men with no technical knowledge themselves are expected to identify those qualities in others, goodness only knows.

The history of the game is littered with technically limited administrators making atrocious coaching appointments, then sacking the coach and surviving themselves to make another choice, to replace the dunno they chose in the first place.

My own view is that national coaches should be chosen not by association presidents, board members and secretaries but by technically qualified people specifically recruited for the task.

It should work simply this way. The association

appoints a technical committee of qualified, former coaches, each with a proven knowledge of what is required and each with no personal ambition for the job itself.

A marketing man should also be part of it for the marketability of the coach is an important component.

In Australia, for example, that committee of, say, four could consist of a Rale Rasic, a Frank Arok, a Ken Worden, a Johnny Warren and the like.

Men who have a long history of involvement in the requirements of international football. Perhaps, for the sake of a neutral element, a foreign man could be recruited to join the group. And, given the current marketing arrangements of Soccer Australia, an IMG man should sit on it, too.

Once the national coach is appointed the committee should be disbanded.

And the Soccer Australia board could sleep a little better, knowing they will be free of all complicity if the coach fails.

And knowing, too, that they will not be able to take credit they don't deserve if the coach does succeed.

MARCONI MAKE QUARTER FINALS OF WORLDWIDE YOUTH TOURNAMENT

By John Economos

Marconi's Youth team which last week participated in Europe's prestigious 51st Viareggio Youth Tournament, annually staged in Italy, returned to Sydney Friday having achieved the best results to date.

This year Marconi's Youth side had been drawn in Group 2 of the 32 team Tournament, and had been bracketted with Perugia, Bari and Pumas of Mexico.

This was Marconi's fourth crusade to the Viareggio Tournament and had always been knocked out in the first round by the very tough fulltime professionals from giant clubs.

In fact in four years of attending the Tournament, only Marconi's 1997 Youth team was able to score a solitary point in Italy.

This year, skippered by 20 year old Buddy Farrah.

First Match vs Perugia: 2-2

In the first game played at the Serie A Perugia Stadium Marconi grimly hung on for a 2-2 draw against Perugia, even though they finished the match



Michael Galluzzo ... Marconi's strong defender.

with 10 men following the 69th minute red card dismissal of Buddy Farrah.

The young Italian referee marched the Marconi skipper for protesting on his ruling after young Australian midfielder Christian Care was heavily felled by a Perugian defender who only received a caution.

Marconi drew first blood when striker Luke Tomich hit the target in the 26th with his second effort after seeing his first come back off the post.

But Perugia, who only last week signed exciting Brazilian 19 year old star Da Silva, stung back six minutes later to equalise through Cerbella.

But three minutes into stoppage time Perugia hit the lead for the first time in the match when Perugia's midfielder Bordicchini scored with his drive from the edge of the box what surely seemed to have been the winner.

However with seconds still left of play Marconi's unmarked teenage striker Fernando Pellegrino, who had come on in the 85th minute to substitute first goalscorer Tomich, heroically slammed in Marconi's second following a square pass from Care, to earn the team from Australia a rare and valuable 2-2 draw.

Fine performances were put in by captain Farrah as well as tenacious young defender Michael Galluzzo.

This was Marconi's only second ever point scored in this very tough Youth tournament involving Europe's top young professionals after having competed at Viareggio over the past four years.

In 1997 Lee Sterrey's Marconi side pulled off a sensational 1-1 draw against the mighty Manchester United.

This young Manchester side was tough and was then captained by current England international Phil Neville.

Second Match vs Bari: 0-3

Last Friday week however, Marconi was quickly brought back down to earth at Santacroce near Pisa, as they crashed to a 3-0 defeat at the hands of the very slick 1997 Viareggio Champions, Bari.

Without suspended captain Farrah, Marconi was always going to struggle.

The crack Bari team which in its first match of the tournament crushed the Mexican side Pumas 4-0, rocketed to the top of Group 2 with six maximum points.

Match Three vs Pumas Mexico: 1-0

Marconi following four years of making the long crusade to Viareggio and having suffered heartbreaks of having not ever notched a single win, finally rectified this situation in the very last match of Round 1 against the Pumas of Mexico. Marconi's inaugural victory arrived 12 minutes from time.

The NSL's Youth league's top goalscorer Mark Hagger, scored a fine goal to inflict a 1-0 defeat and send the Mexicans crashing out of the tournament whilst lifting themselves for the first time ever into Round 2.

With Bari in the other match having played a scoreless draw with Perugia, Marconi finished second in Group 2 with four points, behind leaders Bari.

Marconi had twice hit the Mexican woodwork in the first 15 minutes through Luke Tomich and Victor Tomasevic.

But it was left to hero Hagger to hit the winner as he busted the off-side trap to race away from the stranded Mexican defenders and score.

Hagger in fact scored another just two minutes later when he powered a fabulous header into the target but the flag went up for off-side.

Match 4 vs Vartek (Croatia): 1-2

In the quarter finals against Vartek, winners of Group 1, early last Thursday morning Sydney time, Marconi bowed out of the going down 1-2 to a late Vartek goal.

Despite having back from suspension Farrah, Marconi went into the match without defender Galluzzo who missed this match through having already 'scored' two yellow cards.

Marconi opened the score two minutes before the break through skipper Farrah after Tomich and then Danny Invincible had narrowly failed to score earlier.

Following a corner from Christian Care, Farrah climbed high in the Croatian box to power a bullet header into the frame.

But two minutes after the break, Farrah went from hero to villain as his penalty for a foul on Tomich was blocked by the goalkeeper.

Vartek drew level in the 79th minute when lanky striker Cicovic, following a corner, scored with a fine header.

Four minutes later Vartek made it 1-2 when Posavel from outside the box smashed a vicious left footed drive that flashed into Marconi's net to finally edge the team from Australia out.

For having made it to the Tournament's quarter-finals for the first time ever, the plucky Marconi Youth team was rewarded by club president Tony Labbozzetta who took the entire squad to Pisa to watch the Italian national team enage in a 0-0 battle with touring side Norway.



Luke Tomich ... scored against Perugia.



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Australian Features

CON BLATSI: REMEMBER HIM?

By Mark Stavroulakis

There is nothing more frustrating for a sports person having to sit on the sidelines: just ask South defender Con Blatsis. The big number five has yet to play this season, as injuries have plagued him from the start.

After finishing on such a high note last year winning the championship, it was expected that Blatsis would improve even more this season.

As time goes on, and the body starts to wear from a hard season, injuries take its toll and Con was unfortunate enough to not only pick up one injury, but another one followed.

As soon as the season finished last year, Blatsis picked up a growth problem, which meant that his bones were growing too fast for the body to handle.

This provided excruciating pains throughout his body.

This kept the former Olyroo out for a number of weeks, but he has resumed light training a couple of weeks ago.

To his dismay, the big man picked up yet a second injury, damaging his hamstring.

The good news is that "Blats" is back in action and made his comeback recently against Knights in a 3-1 win.

From reports he impressed. This is of course good news for South Melbourne as injuries and suspensions have troubled the club this year.

According to Blatsis: "This year's competition is much harder than the previous one. The number of quality players clubs have picked up has increased, and the fact that the so-called easy beats of last year have all improved make this year's league more competitive".

He still has high hopes of playing well this season and thinks that a "repeat of last year is on the card".

As far as this year goes, "Blats" thinks that the team has been travelling well, considering the circumstances.

"I think Ange and the boys have been doing quite well considering the amount of injuries and suspension we got this year.

"Also the fact that two quality players such as Billy Damianos (First Division Greece Skoda Xanthi), and Tansel Baser (First Division Turkey Trabzonspor) have left the club has shown we have some depth.

"I think that the fact that Ange has got us as playing as a team, and for each other is what motivates all of us in winning yet another championship.

"It is not only the players that are doing all the hard work and effort on the field, but off it, we have one of the best coaches in the league and that is what makes this team so complete.

Ange understands how a player feels, and it is his leadership that is giving us the upper hand this season".

Blatsis has played for a number of clubs, Clarinda, Bulleen, VIS, but it was the AIS where he made a name for himself, and it was there where he realized that playing professional was what he wanted to do.

The AIS has developed a lot of class players that are making their names abroad. These include Mark Viduka, Ned Zelic, John Aloisi and Craig Moore — just some of the many names playing in Europe, thanks to the coaching and professionalism of the AIS.

One coach in particular, who he regards as the man that started it all was former South Melbourne coach and now UTS Olympic's technical director Frank Arok.

"Frank was one of the coaches at the AIS, when I was there. He was a well-respected coach and he showed me the fine points of being a professional footballer.

"His experience in the game was second to none. His techniques and the style of play he taught me was what changed my game for the better.

"He introduced the attacking side of not only being a defender but to become part of the build up play as well".

Arok's participation in guiding Con to the top did not end there.

"I received a phone call just after I got back from the tour of South America in '96, it was from Frank Arok who at that time was in charge of South Melbourne.



Con Blatsis ... a year of frustrations.

"Frank expressed his interest in me playing for South Melbourne. I jumped at the chance as this was the team I had barracked for as a child".

His rapid progress with South meant that he went straight in to the senior team and has been there ever since. He had a lucky break when the club released players and left a vacancy at right back where he slotted in immediately.

"Frank had a big say in my career, and I thank him for that". No doubt Frank is at work now at Olympic trying to find the next rising star in Australian Soccer."

Asked about the highlights of his young career he responded that apart from winning the championship last year with South Melbourne, representing Australia in the 1997 World Youth Championships in Malaysia was a big achievement for him.

Further, Blatsis was overawed at how professional Europe was, when he went for trials last year. He was invited to England to try out with Birmingham City and Nottingham Forest last year. He loved the thought of playing soccer professionally at a high standard.

"Even though it did not come through, you have always have the door open in Europe, because there are so many clubs there that are interested in Australian players.

"Now I know what is expected in Europe and when I go there again, I will be better equipped for it".

Olympiakos of Greece is one club thought to be keeping a close eye on the defender.

And like former Carlton flyer Andrew Vlahos who signed for Panathiniakos, anything is possible.

"I'd love to go anywhere in Europe, but because my background is Greek, I would like to go there. That's not what's on my mind now, first I want to get back and gain my fitness and touches and hopefully I do well with my club so I can play for my country again.

It was an honour representing Australia in the World Youth Championships in Malaysia. It would be an even greater honour if I represent Australia in the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

The 22 year old still has a lot of time on his hands, and once he gets back on the pitch, watch out for a new look Con Blatsis.

This might be his last year in Australian soccer as the European dream beckons for yet another young player with dreams of overseas glory. So see him while you can on South Melbourne's quest for the Holy Grail of back-to-back titles.

WITH REBECCA...

He is one of the characters in the league. He is extremely tall, likes singing and impersonations, plus, would like to meet a woman with lots of cabbage! He is also in fine form at the moment between the posts. Ladies and Gentlemen, Canberra Cosmos' keeper, Vilson Knezevic.

Congratulations on your current winning streak. How have things changed with new coach Tom Sermanni?

Training sessions are more exciting, most of the players seem to be focusing more because they're enjoying playing soccer again. We are getting more out of training then we were before.

How many games can you win in the rest of the season?

All home games as well as a few away games.

They say to be a keeper you have to be a bit mad. Are you a bit mad and what is the best part of your



Vilson Knezevic with a young fan at the Totalcare Cosmos coaching camps.

game?

At times I can get crazy when the ball goes past me or someone lobs me.

But in general you get like that at times because you want to win. Best part of my game is closing



down the opponent before he can make up his mind as to which corner he wants to put the ball into. High balls also!

What are your ambitions as a player?

To play in Europe and to be the best where ever I play.

What are your future plans?

Buy a boat and cruise along the Adriatic.

Favourite Cosmos player. Why?

Anthony Magnacca because he is a good cook.

What are your memories of making your Knights debut and playing in that Grand Final at Olympic Park?

I was only 17 when I made my debut for the Knights, I then only played a further three games before the Grand Final! It was good to win that Grand Final but I still thought I could have played better. The celebrations were awesome!

On to you now, have you settled into Canberra well and is it much different to Melbourne?

I've settled in OK, the people in Canberra are very supportive and there is a good following of soccer. I can't say however that it compares to Melbourne.

Outside of soccer, what do you like doing?

Playing cards, tennis, singing, eating, and definitely sleeping.

Favourite TV show, holiday destination, food and band?

Seinfeld, Croatian coast, chicken schnitzel and chips, Duran Duran.

Ideal woman?

One with plenty of cabbage!

If you weren't playing soccer what would you be doing?

Basketball player or impersonator.

Where do you think you will be in twenty years?

Sitting on my boat.

Complete this sentence Love is....spoiling my girlfriend with flowers and gifts.

BOOK REVIEW THE CAMPBELL FILES

By Daniel Giorlando

Soccer Weekly fans would recognise the name Donald Campbell. He is one of our correspondents in Adelaide reporting weekly on the Ericsson Cup.

Donald Campbell was one of the world's best referees during the 60s, 70s and 80s as well as holding the title of the world's longest serving FIFA referee.

An order of Australia Medal is also a title that Donald is proud to carry around with him, but now he is an author also, with the publication of his book, "The Campbell Files. Everything you won't find in the Stewart report".

The memoirs gives the reader an insight into the life and personality of Australia's greatest referee as well as a close look at the most hated person on a soccer field: the referee, and the incidents that have helped to influence Australian soccer history through the eyes of referee Campbell.

The book transcribed by fellow Soccer Weekly writer, Margaret Bowden, gives us an understanding of Donald's life from a child on the streets of Glasgow, to his career as a top level referee in Australia.

The files take us through the highs and lows of his career, including achieving his FIFA badge in 1974 to the realisation that at 50 years old, his career as a referee was over (the rules stipulated by FIFA).

The Campbell files even include a section entitled, "The Greatest of the Australian game". It is safe to say that Soccer Weekly's Donald Campbell, is a great name in Australian soccer, and will be remembered as the best ever Australian referee.

"The Campbell Files" is a magnificent read, seen through the eyes of a top class referee who served our game with great distinction.

The book is available for only \$10 plus P & H by calling 08 8296 1354.

Australian Features

VIS: NOW A WORLD-RENOWNED SOCCER SET-UP

By Dwyght Tuffnell

The Victorian Institute of Sport has, for around seven years, provided a service that is benefiting Australian soccer now, and in the years to follow.

It is run along similar lines to what the Australian Institute of Sport is in helping our best young players become better equipped for international football.

VIS Head Coach, Ernie Merrick, a former coach at NSL level with Sunshine George Cross, has been in charge of the VIS program since it began back in 1992.

Since then, the program has enjoyed considerable success.

Several graduates are now playing overseas or for Ericsson Cup teams, although that isn't the aim of the program.

"Fundamentally, the purpose of the VIS program is to train players to play for Australia, not for Premier League, Ericsson Cup or overseas teams, but Australian national teams" explains Merrick.

And it's doing a good job too.

Eight graduates of the VIS are in the running for a spot in the Olyroo squad for next year in Sydney.

Merrick is doing some work with Olyroo coach Raul Blanco, taking the ex-VIS boys for training and assisting them whilst they are not in camp.

The upcoming Young Socceroos should have Adrian Cuzzupe, Vince Grella, Michael Ferrante, Simon Colosimo and John Maisano in the squad, all are former members of the VIS.

"We predominantly prepare players for Under 17 level (Joeys) and Under 20 level (Young Socceroos)" says Merrick.

"The top Under 20s are seconded to the AIS so we tend to have a younger crew."

Merrick selects a squad for the VIS on an annual basis.

Those lucky enough to be given a scholarship by the VIS have extraordinary benefits, more than the average club can offer.

The only cost involved is getting to and from training, everything else (coaching, apparel and other services) are all catered for by the VIS.

"The boys contracts are set and reviewed annually, when they come to us they are not our player, they're free to leave at any time."

There are doctors and physiotherapists to help the players, plus the first-class training facilities available to them at Melbourne High School where there is a synthetic pitch, swimming pool and indoor hall.

Usually the players have been involved in National

VIS Soccer staff

Head Coach:	Ernie Merrick
Assistant Coach:	Aaron Healey
Goalkeeper Coach:	Lou Kastner
Sports Science:	Cathryn Pruscino
Team Manager:	Murray Baum

but thinks that the VIS has one advantage over it.

Based in Canberra, the AIS takes players from all over the country to live and go to school there, but at the VIS, things hardly change at all.

"The boys get to stay at home so they get the support of their parents, their social network is the

with any of the scholarship holders' schoolwork suffering.

Cuzzupe and Martin John recently completed their VCE, (Victorian Certificate of Education) so successfully that they were able to get into the courses they wanted at university.

"Education is a major part of the VIS program too" said Merrick

"There's a pretty good balance between soccer and academic structure, it's not all soccer, soccer and soccer."

"We give them individual programs to work on. Things like sprint training, plyometrics and weight training."

"Then they come to the VIS at 5pm, five days a week, plus the game on the weekend."

The VIS has approximately 450 athletes in all sports. The likes of Daniel Kowalski, Emma George and 'The Oarsome Foursome' are all part of the VIS.

Its funding comes from National and State governments, the Commonwealth and private sponsorship.

The Commonwealth Bank is the VIS's major sponsor. Snickers and Asics are major supporters of the soccer program.

"It's only thanks to this type of funding that we are able to provide such a comprehensive program" Merrick says.

Programs like the AIS and VIS are known throughout the world, and people from overseas are taking a leaf out of books, seeing how successful Australia has been in recent years at Commonwealth and Olympic games.

"We've just developed a sister relationship with the Scottish Institute of Sport", said Merrick, "they realise how valuable a program like this can be."

"They (programs like the AIS and VIS), are the envy of the world. We've had people over here from Europe and America to see what we are doing."



The VIS 1999 Squad.

championships or with the Victorian Soccer Federation various developments squads.

"We pick them up between the ages of 14 and 16, only exceptional ones at 14 like Grella, Colosimo and Ferrante Merrick has all bases covered in exceptional cases."

"There's always boys who miss out on junior teams through injury or late maturation so there's a safety net to catch all of those who miss out" Merrick said.

"I've got a network, coaches I know who might say 'Have a look at this lad'."

Chances are, if you're about 15 years old, a talented player but not involved in any representative team, Merrick will still know about you.

Merrick though, is quick to recognise the support of other parties who are tied in with the VIS program.

"If it wasn't for the VSF, we wouldn't have what we have and if our relationship with the clubs wasn't as amiable, we'd be in trouble."

The VIS offers much more than the average club does, such as comprehensive sports medicine and sports science programs.

Some of the things in these two programs look and seem fairly complicated, but nothing at the VIS is left to chance.

Players can be told how they are performing in games by the use of a computer, Merrick explains.

"We video the game and then use a computer to work out how much possession of the ball all the boys involved had and how they distributed the ball."

"We're getting direct feedback on what they are doing."

He says that sports science "is an ongoing thing", no matter how difficult it may seem to be to understand, it is definitely working.

"It is a pretty comprehensive program" says Merrick. "We're trying to better it all the time."

He is also full of praise for the AIS program,

same and their education doesn't suffer because they're at the same school."

Merrick says that there has never been a problem

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EVERY VIS

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(*denotes current squad member)

Allsopp, Daniel	Anastasiou, Les	Anderson, Michael	Androulidakis, Jack
Arcuri, Pat	Atanasovski, Zdravko	Azzopardi, Colin	Bazzano, Frank
Beattie, Damian	Bell, Clayton	Bichler, Klaus	Blatsis, Con
Bosevski, Michael	Bristow, Glen	Byrne, Paul	Caniglia, Adrian
Carey, Joe	Carrozza, John	Cassar, Ben	Cassar, Damian
Chiodo, Anthony	Colosimo, Simon	Craig, David	Cuzzupe, Adrian *
Cvetanovski, John	Deak, Ante	Di Iorio, Joey	Di Iorio, Peter
Dimozantos, Jason *	Ergin, Erol	Fehmi, Ozan	Ferrante, Michael
Galekovic, Eugene	Grella, Pasquale	Grella, Vince	Hastie, John
Healey, Aaron	Hrehoresin, Adam *	Hulusi, Serhat	John, Martin *
Kail, Scott	Kennedy, Joshua	Lakovski, Robert	Lassey, Brian
Laurie, Steve	Lazarevski, Nick	Lettieri, Fab	Liucci, Robert
Madarovski, Danny	Maisano, John	McClure, Alan	McDonald, Scott *
Milicevic, Ljubo	Mitrevski, Denis	Motsopoulos, Ang *	Mrkela, Steven
Mustafa, Mustafa	Nastevski, Dragi	Osman, Levent	Oter, Stefan
Ovcin, Boris	Panopoulos, Steve	Pantelidis, George *	Pavlinusic, Petar
Petkovski, David *	Petrovski, Zoran	Petrovski, Bill	Pondeljaj, Tom
Popovski, Robert	Presti, Paul	Razzi, Sandro	Rainey, Daniel *
Rocco, Daniel *	Saric, Greg	Sastre, Juan	Sekulovski, Naum *
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Stojilovski, Darko	Storey, Simon	Terek, David *	Trebbia, Leo *
Tricarico, Joe	Tsoumerkass, Leigh	Vargas, Andy	Vasilevski, Daniel
Vassallo, Brandon	Vucinic, Denis	Wardle, Steve	Zaekis, Laz
Zois, Peter			

Australian Features

COSMOS TRAVELLER'S CAPITAL CHALLENGE

By Aidan Ormond

Tommy Sermanni has come back to Australia after a coaching stint in Japan. The Scottish born coach returned to take over the helm at Canberra Cosmos, and so far the team has responded achieving two victories under his leadership.

Sermanni, who led a successful and high flying side Hiroshima in the J-League, (as assistant to ex-Socceroo coach Eddie Thomson) now has the much tougher task of lifting Canberra off the bottom of the National Soccer League ladder.

In this exclusive interview, Tommy talks to Soccer Weekly about life in Japan, how the J-league compares with the robust NSL as well as his plans for the present and future.

Tommy Sermanni thank you for talking to Soccer Weekly and welcome back to Australia. Firstly, what's it like to be back coaching full-time in Australia?

I've been really pleased since I've come back at the end of my two years at Hiroshima. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do but when the Cosmos job came along, it all fell into place.

Since I've come back I been surprised by the situation at Canberra Cosmos. I thought it would be a dying club cause of results but in fact it's quite a vibrant club.

Why is this so?

There's a hardcore of supporters who have supported the team despite their results which is tremendous and there is a group of Directors dedicated to the club continuing next year and being more successful.

The players have been really committed to the task. They are full of enthusiasm and wanting to do well.

What did you expect of Canberra when you took over as coach?

When I looked at the results and when I heard everything that has happened with speculation around the club, my expectations were not high but in fact that has not been the case.

Following your two years in Hiroshima, how would you describe life in Japan?

Tremendous, the Japanese people are unbelievably friendly and generous. Hiroshima is a great city to live in because of its size, it's a city with one million people and it's easy to get around (apart from finding it hard to read the signs!).

During your stay in Japan, did it help that you were involved in soccer?

I think that helps when you are involved in anything be it sport, entertainment or where you attract attention, people immediately treat you differently but despite that, just being around the place and getting to know people was brilliant.

With the Japanese players, how are they different to Australian footballers?

I found that physically our players are a bit stronger. They are a bit more robust and the sheer strength of our game is greater.

The Japanese play much better football. They have a good touch on the ball, they are quite strong on the ball but our players just have more power. The Japanese aren't small but technically they are better.

Also in their culture, they are very fair and in some ways this is a disadvantage when you play sport at a higher level because it holds them back a bit.

How can Japanese football improve?

They have one player who has gone to Perugia who is doing very well but apart from that all the other players play in Japan.

If you look at Australia they have improved on the word stage because more of our players have gone to play at the best standard in the world. I think the Japanese need to do that.

Do you think their poor showing at the World Cup will possibly force that notion of having to play around the world?

I think so but I honestly don't think that their showing at the World Cup was that poor.

They didn't win any games but they only lost by one goal to Argentina and one goal to Croatia and those were two teams who could have gone all the way in the World Cup. The only game that did disappoint was the Jamaican game and that really summed up the tournament for the Japanese.

At the moment they lack a bit of that killer instinct. Against Argentina and Croatia, the game was even but their lack of killer instinct and toughness cost them.

Were you in Japan during the World Cup? What was the interest during the World Cup?

I went home to Scotland for a week but I was in Japan for a fair amount of the Cup.

There was a great deal of interest but the problem in Japan was that you are kind of isolated from what goes on cause you can't read the newspapers — its not even in English and you don't get any idea of what is being said around the place although they got a great deal of coverage.

Are you confident that Japan can run a good World Cup?

I'm confident they can but I feel that the difficulty will be that it is being shared. You are talking about two different countries with two different languages and two different cultures so that the logistical differences will cause headaches.

I think in reality, Japan is much better suited to holding the World Cup itself because it has the stadiums, it has the infrastructure and the transport so I think a more logical decision would have been to hold the World Cup in Japan and it would be easier for everybody.

Now that you are back in Australia and in Canberra, what sort of approach do you intend to use with the team?

I suppose you have to adjust to the circumstances

that you have taken over a team that's not doing well.

I think the key for me has been the confidence factor and getting it back to the players.

How do you get the confidence back to the players?

I've tried to increase the intensity of training, and I also try to make sure the team is well organised.

I really work hard on players knowing what their job is on the field because we have to make sure that we are well organised so that we can be competitive.

Are you enjoying life at the Cosmos?

At the moment, very much because of the response I have got from the players. Quite often when you join a team such as Canberra, you get disharmony in the team because of losing and people tend to look at other people to pass on responsibility. This has not happened.

Would our top two or three teams be able to compete in the J-league?

I think the top two or three would be able to compete but the difference is that we have got between 60-100 players overseas and if you did that in Japan, we would easily compete in the J-league.

What about your future with Cosmos?

You look at it from week to week but at the same time your planning the future ahead. I am enjoying the job now and if the club feel I am the one to take them into the next season then at this moment in time I would be happy to do that, but I am quite happy here. My main priority is to make our team competitive.

A couple of million dollars won't go astray in Canberra?

I'd like that but it will never happen because we are a provincial side. We have to develop and produce our own players and we have to compete with Sydney and Melbourne for players because that's where the majority of them live.

Is this one of the reasons why Canberra haven't been a top six side?

It's not the fact that players won't come here but I think the club has chopped and changed but there isn't one specific reason why the Cosmos hasn't been successful.

How healthy soccer scene in Canberra?

I think that there is potential for a successful soccer club and the quality of teams should have led to the team being more successful than what they have been. I can't tell you the reasons for that, hopefully the directors will keep the experienced players and mix them up with some youngsters players.

You must have been happy with the qualification of the women's side to this year's World Cup? Have you seen many games?

I still follow the girls with a keen interest. The interest in the game has crept up in the



Tommy Sermanni ... he is back in Australian and he is determined to turn the Cosmos into a successful

past four years.

When you are involved, you kind of not notice the growing interest of the female game because it's kind of happening quietly but our team has improved dramatically.

Our chances in the Women's World Cup?

We need a good draw and if they can get into the last eight well who knows.

What does the future hold for Tommy Sermanni?

I have no idea what my future holds but I'm enjoying the challenges. Since coming to Australia and since I began coaching, I have considered myself extremely fortunate because firstly I have always been in a job and, secondly, I've always had offers of a job that I wanted to take and taking on that challenge. But I'm just trying to enjoy what I'm doing because it could all end tomorrow.

How many wins can you realistically rack up to the end of this year?

I'd like to win four or five wins by the end of the season. I'd be very pleased with that and it will give the players a sense of achievement.

Well thanks for talking to us Tommy and we all hope that you can turn Cosmos into a top six team. Good luck for the rest of the year.

Cheers Aidan and look forward to seeing Soccer Weekly at a Cosmos game.

*Cosmos Ericsson Cup match reports are on page 12 and the Wilson Knezevic interview is on page five.



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Australian Features



Diegos: "It seems that you've had more trials with overseas clubs than Danni Minogue has had plastic surgery. What are some of the clubs you've trialled with in the last 12 months and just as Danni has developed into a new improved bustier model, do you believe your trial experiences have improved you as a player?"

DeAmicis: "Yes I've had a few trials. I feel more like a Leyland brother these days rather than a better player."

Diegos: "You could say that you've had more trials than Bill Clinton."

De Amicis: "The US is one place I haven't been but I suppose trialling with so many clubs is not a bad way to see the world. I went to Middlesbrough and Hansa Rostock back in June last year."

"I also trialled with Go Ahead Eagles in Holland. Unfortunately the only thing I got to go ahead with at that club was a flight back to Australia. The most recent trial was with Manchester City, which was a great experience."

Diegos: "When it comes to spontaneous overseas travel, it's clear that you don't suffer from the Christopher Skase 'Give me the oxygen mask and wheelchair you won't get me on that plane' syndrome. It seems that you have to be prepared to attend trials at short notice. Does this have an unsettling affect on you personally and your club, South Melbourne?"

De Amicis: "It significantly affects all parts of my life. At South Melbourne we are going for back-to-back titles and my frequent trips have had an unsettling affect on the team, which I think is a little unfair on Ange and the boys. My most recent trip to Manchester thankfully, coincided with the bye, so that wasn't as much of a problem."

"It's tough on the family too. Back in June, I went over to play for the Socceroos against Croatia and afterwards, decided to visit some of my family in Italy. When I returned, I received a call within three days to fly back again to Hansa Rostock in Germany."

"It was very hard to have to travel all



over again within such a short space of time. I ended up spending two weeks with Hansa and Middlesbrough. The latter being another extremely enjoyable experience."

Diegos: "It must have been great mixing drinks with Paul

Gascoigne. He seems like someone who would be better suited gambling, drinking, fighting and playing cricket for the Australian cricket team rather than playing soccer in England. What were your impressions of him?"

De Amicis: "Although I haven't able to secure a contract, the experience of

meeting and playing with someone of the stature of Paul Gascoigne is an unforgettable experience. On one occasion I happen to be sitting right opposite him at lunch after training."

"I asked him about his experiences in Italy when he was playing with Lazio, and he replied in Italian because there were a number of other Italian players present. Listening to the great Paul Gascoigne speaking Italian with a thick pommy accent was quite funny. I found him to be a very nice person who made me feel very comfortable and welcome."

"He was very cheerful and always ready to make his teammates laugh. He was loved by all supporters. His mere presence in pre-season friendly games would swell the crowds by 6,000 or 7,000 people. Opposition supporters would clap him whenever he came near the ball. He is a player that could do wonders on the pitch. It was a real thrill to be there on

the same park with a truly world class player."

Diegos: "When you're introduced to fellow overseas teammates as an Australian triallist, I would image that they would expect your name to be something like 'Chooka', 'Bazza', 'Browneye', 'Macca' or 'Chunder'. Do they look slightly bemused when you introduce yourself as dinky dye, bonza Aussie, Fausto De Amicis?"

De Amicis: "They did keep on asking over and over what my name was. At Manchester, they all ended up calling me 'Faustino'. I don't know whether that was because of the way I played or because they couldn't pronounce my name. I took it as a compliment anyway."

Diegos: "You've recently returned from a trial with Manchester City in the English second division. How did that trial go and is City still a big club or is it nowadays, merely a poor relation of Manchester United?"

The First Guest of the Week we have one of the shining lights of South Melbourne's quest to achieve the 'Golden Holy Grail' of the Ericsson Cup; back to back premierships.

Like a fine homemade wine, he seems to be getting better and better with age, so much so, that most of his Socceroo caps and interest from numerous overseas clubs have come relatively late in his career.

Please a big Four Diegos and Soccer Weekly welcome to South Melbourne's star defender, Fausto de Amicis.

De Amicis: "It's a little bit like that at the moment. In a way the club really doesn't deserve to be in division two because it's a big club and very well supported. From what people were telling me, most of the people living in Manchester actually support City rather than United."

"All the United fans tend to come from outside the city. While I was there, they drew a crowd of 32,000 when they beat

Fulham 3-0. It was a fantastic atmosphere and again it was a great experience for me."

"While I was there the coach came out publicly in the press and stated that there was a very good chance that he would sign me. Unfortunately the club decided not to go on with the signing because the team was starting to get some good results."

"The outcome was pretty disappointing but I guess it just wasn't to be. I've got nothing to lose coming back to South Melbourne though. We have an opportunity to go back to back and that is a very special achievement that I would like to be part of."

Diegos: "South Melbourne are top of the table at present. They have become the masters of grinding out a result and doing just enough to win. In many instances it can be unattractive stuff, so much so, it seems that your own crowd booed the team when you played Adelaide Sharks."

"Are you on target to win another championship and what is it like to have pumpkin seed shells thrown at you?"

De Amicis: "To be honest we didn't get booed against the Sharks. Having said that, this hasn't always been the case."

"Last season when we were drawing games at home, our crowd was definitely booing us. Our spectators have always demanded success and that's the sort of pressure you have to live with when you're playing for a big club like South



Fausto De Amicis aiming for back-to-back Ericsson Cups.

Melbourne."

Diegos: "So they were actually throwing rose petals rather than pumpkins seed shells?"

De Amicis: "I think it was more like Albert Park seagull droppings. The Bob Jane birds are well known for doing that."

Diegos: "Unfortunately you were a member of the Socceroo squad that was tragically beaten by New Zealand in the Confederation cup play-off last October. Seeing that it's not a result that you'd like to conclude with on your international soccer resume, are you desperate to gain selection to the Socceroos again, so that you can exorcise the demons of that game?"

De Amicis: "By all means. I'm always wanting to do as well as I can so that I can catch the eye of the national coach. I will always make myself available to play for Australia and I will always cherish every opportunity I've had to serve my country."

Diegos: "Thanks Faustino. Watch out for those low flying Albert Park Lake seagulls. Adios Amigo!"

De Amicis: "Thanks Diegos. They say if you get hit it's good luck. If we are going to win back to back we're going to need it. Adios Amigos!"

Australia U/16s In July 1987: How many present day stars, playing here and overseas, can you recognise? We've picked up four. Answers next week.



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Australian Features

THE SOCCEROO WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD?

Diegos: "Back in 1993, in the cut throat World Cup qualifier against Canada, it seemed that your winning penalty shoot out save and subsequent hot and spicy kiss from teammate, Aurelio Vidmar, triggered a professional career overseas."

"After a low spell with Kaiserslautern in the German Bundesliga, you have developed into one of the best goalkeepers in the English Premiership with Middlesbrough. Looking back, was it the save against Canada or Aurelio's kiss that did it for you?"

Schwarzer: "It was a bit of both, I must say. The save obviously did help me but the kiss inspired me."

Diegos: "Recently your team stunned every fanatical, partisan, two-headed Manchester United supporter by beating their beloved team 3-2 at Old Trafford. Was that the best win that you've been involved with as a player?"

Schwarzer: "It would have to be up there with one of my best wins that's for sure. It was a totally unexpected result in the eyes of many of the soccer pundits. I think we were the only people who believed that we could win at Old Trafford. It was great to be able to transmit that belief into a terrific performance on the pitch."

Diegos: "In that game the Red Devils fought their way back from a 3-0 deficit to 3-2 and in the dying minutes, peppered your goal searching for the equaliser. At one stage when you made a difficult save, there were no less than four goal ravenous, United predators ready to snap up any crumbs from a potential fumble. Do you get the shakes in these pressure situations?"

Schwarzer: "Not really while your playing. I think the shakes appear more so, when you're watching the video of the game later. You think 'Oh my God what if I had dropped the ball', but that doesn't go through my mind when I playing thankfully. You are aware that your team is one goal ahead and the opposition is bearing down on you but you get used to it. I've grown to realise this sort of pressure is all part and parcel of the game."

Diegos: "Your manager at Middlesbrough, Bryan Robson has recently rewarded you with a long term

movie star contract. He is a bona-fide English soccer legend. What's he like as a manager and now that Glenn Hoddle is gone, is he ready to lead England?"

Schwarzer: "In my opinion, I think he would be more than capable of taking over the job. From a selfish point of view though, I think it would be great if he doesn't go because he is doing such a great job with Middlesbrough. He has already stated in the press that he is not interested in taking over the position at the moment."

"I think the more experience he can gain in the

league club was a piece of cake in comparison. Playing here is almost like playing at home."

"The culture and the people are very similar to what I'm used to in Australia. The weather though, leaves a lot to be desired but everything else is very similar, so it was very easy for me to fit in."

Diegos: "Middlesbrough was the home of one of the first Aussies abroad to make his mark, Craig Johnston, in the 70s and early 80s. Is there any evidence at the club that he is still remembered?"

Schwarzer: "Yes definitely. Obviously there are a few pictures of him around the place. People still tell me stories about Craig Johnston as a Middlesbrough player."

"I think that he is more remembered for his move to Liverpool and the success he had there. Once he moved on and established himself at Anfield, I think it was then, that Middlesbrough people put their hand up and claimed him as one of their own."

Diegos: "You were quoted on the eve of the Australia v Iran World Cup qualifier in 1997, that your non selection in the squad amounted to 'a Socceroo plot against you'. To the average soccer fan, it sounded more like an episode of the X-Files where Mulder argues that it's all a conspiracy. Do you still aspire to be part of future Socceroo teams and what do you think about the team having to play through South America to get to the World Cup in 2002?"

Schwarzer: "Yes definitely, I would love to play for Australia. I was fortunate enough to have Tony Labbozzetta and Les Scheinflug visit met recently."

"They wanted to know whether I was still interested in playing for Australia and I told them that I was and that I would be available to play for the Socceroos against the World XI in June, for the opening of the new Olympic stadium in Sydney."

"Qualifying for the World Cup has never been easy for us. I think the best chance we had was against Iran last time around. We've played through South America before, when we tried to qualify for USA 94, so from that point of view, we know what it's all about and it should hold no surprises for us. It's definitely going to be difficult but if you're vying for a spot in the World Cup you're always going to face tough opposition."

"It's no good getting to the finals via an easy route and getting beaten every time. Hopefully if you go through a difficult qualifying schedule it will better prepare you for the big guns in the finals."

Diegos: "There are many young Aussies in this country who look at you and say, 'I want to be like Mark Schwarzer'. How does that make you feel and are there any pitfalls in being a megarich, pampered, lusted after, superstar soccer player?"

Schwarzer: "I don't look at myself as a superstar footballer."

"Obviously you come to realise that you do have a lot of fans out there and people who look up to you. But for me it's a hobby that just happens to be my profession. I just really enjoy

playing. Whatever comes along with that, I've just got to take in my stride."

Diegos: "Thanks Mark. We might get Aurelio to give you another sloppy kiss. You never know where that might take you."

Maybe with the Socceroos to a World Cup. Adios Amigo!"

Schwarzer: "Thanks Diegos. If it's going to get us to the World Cup, I think that I would even kiss the Diegos! Adios Amigos."



Mark Schwarzer: Available to play for the Socceroos this June.



Mark Schwarzer with the Socceroos against South Africa four years ago.

'The Four Diegos' are radio celebrities and soccer scribes on Melbourne's Stereo 97.4 FM

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Until next time...Adios Amigos!

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SOCCER WOMAN

WITH JANENE MAR IN CANBERRA

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES 1998/99

Round Nine

ECLIPSE IN GRAND FINAL CANBERRA ECLIPSED

CANBERRA ECLIPSE	1
(Amy Kilpatrick 13)	
NSWIS SAPPHIRES	0

Canberra Eclipse battled the odds to secure first place and a berth in their first ever Ansett Summer Series grandfinal with a thrilling 1-0 victory over defending champions NSWIS Sapphires last Sunday at Sydney United.

The pressure was on Canberra to win Sunday or risk missing out on the final altogether. Although still holding a four-point lead at the top of the ladder, this was their last match of the season. Anything less than the three points would have put them in real danger of being overtaken by the Sapphires and SASI Pirates whilst they have the Round 10 bye.

The Eclipse rallied for a fantastic performance, bouncing back from their poor showing the previous day, and managed the crucial win without key players Peita-Claire Hepperlin and Sacha Wainwright, out through suspension. There were concerns that Canberra's Sunday performances have often been a mere shadow of their Saturday display. But Canberra came out a different side, hungry for the ball and making good use of it. They combined well as a unit, and pushed forward at pace.

Canberra's previous best national league performance is fourth place.

Canberra Eclipse put the home side defence under instant pressure from the opening whistle, and had the ball in the back of the net in the 2nd minute, but the goal was disallowed. The Sapphires failed to clear the ball from the danger area and a desperate clearance saw the ball smack into the arm of Canberra's Dior Foxhill who thence drove the ball at the target, only for the referee to pull play back for handball.

Sapphires' striker Michelle Carney was presented with a fantastic chance on goal six minutes later before Canberra's Nancy Foot raced in on the blind side to put in a solid tackle as Carney unleashed her shot. The Eclipse then responded with a neat passing combination up the middle which ended with a Lisa Casagrande shot saved by NSW keeper Cassandra Kell.

In the 11th minute, a defensive header landed perfectly for the unchallenged Eclipse midfielder Amy Wilson, and her first time attempt from the edge of the box rocked the crossbar.

Just two minutes later, Canberra took the lead. Another slick string of passes, and Amy Kilpatrick was found unmarked slightly left of goal to blast the ball in from 13 metres.

Sapphires' Kelly Golebiowski worked hard to create opportunities but with no reward and unlucky not to score herself in the 26th minute as her shot from a wide angle on the left flew past the far top corner of goal.

Chances continued at both ends in the fast-paced, physical contest, but it was the Eclipse forcing their way in on goal, whilst the Sapphires found it more difficult to penetrate the opposition backline.

With much at stake, tension grew and tempers frayed increasingly as the game wore on, with still the single goal separating the two sides. The already depleted Canberra lost Lisa Casagrande and Traci Bartlett early in the second half to injury.

NSW Sapphires fought hard in search of the equaliser, Joanne Peters and Golebiowski coming closest from long range, but the Eclipse remained focused and held firm. Sapphires' Bridgette Starr succumbed to the frustration, receiving a red card for elbowing opponent Amy Kilpatrick in the 88th minute. Eclipse then survived a long eight extra minutes of stoppage time before celebrating their sweetest of victories.

NSWIS SAPPHIRES	2
(Michelle Carney 45, Anissa Tann-Darby 67)	
CANBERRA ECLIPSE	0

NSWIS Sapphires boosted their chances for a place in the grandfinal with a strong 2-0 win over leaders Canberra Eclipse in Saturday's clash at Sydney United.

The result moved the Sapphires up into second place, one vital point ahead of SASI Pirates who had the bye.

A Canberra defensive error allowed Michelle Carney in on goal in the opening two minutes, but her shot skewed well wide. With yellow cards to Bridgette Starr and Angela Iannotta inside the first seven minutes, it was clear this was to be no match for the fainthearted.

Eclipse had their best two chances midway through the first half, Lisa Casagrande's shot on the run from the edge of the 18-yard tipped over by keeper Cassandra Kell, and Cindy Doyle's attempt from near the left post causing some problems as it whizzed across the face of goal.

Yet despite these scares, it was NSW Sapphires who

gradually gained control and proved the stronger in the emotion-charged battle. The Sapphires finally broke through shortly before half-time to take the 1-0 lead. Canberra's defence were caught in possession in the corner of the pitch and failed to clear the ball.

Kelly Golebiowski latched on to the ball and waltzed between the two defenders before providing a perfect cross for Carney, unmarked and finishing well from 12 metres out.

Canberra's defence continued to look shaky and Golebiowski almost scored from a poor backpass in the 63rd minute. Four minutes later, Sapphires' lead was doubled, Golebiowski again causing headaches in the Eclipse backline. In front of goal inside the 18-yard box, Golebiowski had possession of the ball with last defender Peita-Claire Hepperlin marking up tightly. With her back to goal, the attacker went to make her move past Hepperlin but the defender brought Golebiowski down heavily and Hepperlin was given her marching orders.

Anissa Tann-Darby blasted the resultant penalty into the top left corner of goal to seal the win at 2-0.

THORNTON AND DUNNE STAR

QAS STING	5
(April Mann 22, Tammie Thornton 38, 64, Lisa Dunne 74, 76)	
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON	0

After some recent disappointing results, QAS Sting finally hit their goalscoring straps to post an emphatic 5-0 win over Northern NSW Horizon on Saturday at Southport Soccer Club.

The opening 11 minutes saw QAS' Kim Revell hit the woodwork, and Lisa Dunne hit the post with two other attempts flying just wide of the mark. The home side then lost keeper Claire Nichols after a heavy challenge left her with a serious facial injury.

A Northern freekick in the 21st minute was inches too high but a minute later, the Sting finally took the lead. A good through ball from Megan Bond found its way to midfielder April Mann who finished the move

from 10 metres out.

Seven minutes before the break, Tammie Thornton scored her first for the season to double QAS' lead. Thornton set off on a solo run, weaving her way past three opponents into the penalty area to slot the ball past the keeper, onto the post and in.

Thornton scored her second midway through the second half, felled just outside the box and she pushed towards goal. Thornton lined up to take the freekick herself, and smashed an incredible strike straight through the wall into the back of the net for a 3-0 scoreline.

Ten minutes later, Dunne hit a pair of goals inside three minutes for the final score of 5-0. Latching onto a neat through ball from Sonia Gegenhuber, Dunne made no mistake from 8 metres. Jessica Mitchell then sent over a great cross from the left for Dunne to finish in clinical style.

NSW STUNG

QAS STING	5
(Lisa Dunne 12, 81, Alicia Ferguson 56, Zoe Nolan 75, Jessica Mitchell 86)	
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON	2
(Cheryl Salisbury 55, Katie Gill 69)	

QAS Sting continued on from where they left off for a solid 5-2 victory over Northern NSW Horizon on Sunday at Southport Soccer Club on the Gold Coast.

Surging forward to earn seven corners inside the opening eleven minutes was a sure sign they were out for more goals to add to their Saturday bagful. In the 12th minute, a pinpoint cross from Corinne Currey on the left was finished in brilliant fashion with a bullet of a header from striker Lisa Dunne from close range.

But Northern fought on, rookie Katie Gill came close to equalising five minutes later, keeper Joanne Butland getting to the ball at the last moment to deny her.

Ten minutes before the break, Horizon midfielder Jodie Randall found the post with her attempt on goal.

Ten minutes into the second half, Cheryl Salisbury

levelled the score for Northern with an impressive individual goal struck from 16 yards. The visitors' joy was shortlived however, as in the very next minute, Sting's Alicia Ferguson regained the lead getting the ball amidst a goalmouth scramble and slotting it past the keeper. More drama followed as Salisbury shortly afterwards received her second yellow card for the match to reduce Horizon to ten players.

Despite their numerical disadvantage, Northern managed to pull back level once more at 2-2, Gill sliding home the loose ball from a rebounded shot off the keeper.

But the dominant QAS shrugged off the Northern challenge to post three late goals and kill off any hopes of a Northern result. Zoe Nolan struck in the 75th minute, finding the net directly from the corner kick. A moment later, Dunne hit the post, before then scoring her second for the game in the 81st minute, a sensational chip over the keeper from an impossible angle on the left edge of the 18-yard.

Young Jessica Mitchell then sealed the win at 5-2 with four minutes remaining.

Megan Bond provided the pass, and Mitchell lobbed it into the top of the net for her first national league goal.

SAPPHIRES AND STING BATTLE IT OUT

This weekend's last round will decide Canberra Eclipse's opponent for this season's grandfinal, last year's finalists NSWIS Sapphires and SASI Pirates both well in the running with Sapphires just a point in front.

It is the two sides who have been out of the running for the grandfinal who can still play a major part in deciding who will win through. The Pirates have the seemingly easier task to gain the maximum points, taking on last-placed Northern NSW Horizon in Adelaide. Horizon however have shown that they can cause problems, bouncing back from a 9-0 loss to draw

1-1 with Canberra in Round 8.

Northern will have to take the field without the suspended Cheryl Salisbury.

NSWIS Sapphires take on QAS Sting in their quest for the grandfinal but will be without suspended Bridgette Starr and Kelly Golebiowski on Saturday. The Sting will be lifted by their goalscoring feats last weekend and may be a tough nut to knock over. These matches are now being played at Lions Stadium in Richlands, Brisbane.

PROGRESSIVE POINTS TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
CANBERRA ECLIPSE	16	9	3	4	32	25	7	30
NSWIS SAPPHIRES	14	6	5	3	21	11	10	23
SASI PIRATES	14	6	4	4	22	10	12	22
QAS STING	14	5	2	7	24	25	-1	17
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON	14	2	2	10	13	41	-28	8

TOP GOALSCORERS '98/99

16	Lisa CASAGRANDE	Canberra Eclipse
11	Lisa DUNNE	QAS Sting
6	Cheryl SALISBURY	Northern NSW Horizon
6	Natalie THOMAS	SASI Pirates
5	Julie MURRAY	NSWIS Sapphires
4	Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI	NSWIS Sapphires
4	Angela IANNOTTA	Canberra Eclipse
4	Sharon BLACK	SASI Pirates
4	April MANN	QAS Sting
4	Anissa TANN-DARBY	NSWIS Sapphires

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES ROUND 10

Sat 20 Feb	SASI Pirates v Northern NSW Horizon	Hindmarsh Stadium	3pm
Sat 20 Feb	AS Sting v NSWIS Sapphires	Lions Stadium, Richlands	3pm
Sun 21 Feb	SASI Pirates v Northern NSW Horizon	Hindmarsh Stadium	3pm
Sun 21 Feb	QAS Sting v NSWIS Sapphires	Lions Stadium, Richlands	3pm

SUMMER IS... ERICSSON CUP

next round

Saturday 20 February

Melbourne Knights v Northern Spirit
Knights Stadium

Sunday 21 February

Adelaide City v Wollongong Wolves

Hindmarsh Stadium

Carlton SC v Brisbane Strikers

Optus Oval

South Melbourne v Marconi Fairfield

Bob Jane Stadium

Gippsland Falcons v Newcastle

Breakers

Mobil Park

Sydney United v Perth Glory

Edensor Park

Monday 22 February

Canberra Cosmos v Sydney Olympic

Bruce Stadium

Bye: Adelaide Sharks

Please note, these fixtures are supplied by Soccer Australia, and are correct at time of printing. Please check local guides in case of changes. We accept no responsibility for any late changes to fixtures, or incorrect information supplied to us.

RESULTS ROUND 20

Newcastle Breakers 0
South Melbourne 0

Marconi Fairfield 2
Canberra Cosmos 1

Northern Spirit 3
Carlton SC 1

Adelaide Sharks 0
Gippsland Falcons 0

Sydney Olympic 2
Sydney United 1

Perth Glory 6
Brisbane Strikers 0

Melbourne Knights 3
Adelaide City 1

Bye Wollongong Wolves

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	19	12	4	3	37	21	40
Sydney United	19	11	3	5	32	22	36
Perth	19	10	3	6	39	21	33
Adelaide City	19	10	3	6	30	18	33
Northern Spirit	19	10	2	7	24	24	32
Sydney Olympic	19	9	4	6	35	25	31
Carlton	19	8	4	7	36	27	28
Brisbane	18	8	4	6	27	26	28
Marconi-Fairfield	18	8	3	7	31	35	27
Newcastle	19	6	5	8	18	26	23
Wollongong	18	5	5	8	25	31	20
Adelaide Sharks	19	5	5	9	27	31	20
Gippsland	18	4	5	9	12	30	17
Melbourne Knights	18	4	4	10	20	30	16
Canberra	19	2	2	15	14	39	8





ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 20
12-14 FEBRUARY
1999

KNEZEVIC LEADS COSMOS TO ANOTHER WIN

CANBERRA COSMOS 1
Buljan 8
WOLLONGONG WOLVES 0
At Bruce Stadium, Canberra
(Round 19 Match Monday 8 Feb)

By Nick Guoth

Canberra won its second game of the season, though less convincing than the first, through an early penalty and followed up by excellent defence.

Wollongong weren't blameless as they sprayed an array of chances in all directions bar the goal, and when they did find the target, Wilson Knezevic was able to intercept with his huge frame.

The Cosmos opened up very strongly with Leo Langone just a second too late to a neat Peter Buljan cross. Then with eight minutes gone, a long cross from Lindsay Wilson found Ivo DeJesus on the edge of the box. He chipped Damon Langan and when he tried to pass Langan, he was pulled down.

Referee Jeff Tippet awarded the penalty, the first for Canberra this season, and leading scorer Peter Buljan stepped up. His shot went left, but so did Les Pogliacomi who pushed the ball out. It fell to Buljan,

and a second chance was not spurned.

What followed was a myriad of chances although most fell to Wollongong.

Their lack of direction in front of goal was too evident as one Wolves player after another could not find the target.

Amidst Wollongong peppering the Cosmos goal, the odd breakaway fell to Canberra, but like their opponents never really threatened to score.

Five minutes before the break, Wollongong had its best chance when Canberra had fallen asleep in defence. A cross found three players against one and the keeper in front of the goal. Lack of talk meant that Matt Horsley and Scott Chipperfield ran into each other and saw the ball spill away for a goalkick.

The second half was played as the first, with Wolves having the lions' share of the play. Most of their attacking play came from the wings, and whilst Horsley was well held by Lindsay Wilson, Chad Bishop had a little more freedom down the left.

Yet still either they shot wild or found Knezevic in superb form. Knezevic pulled off three remarkable saves to keep a clean sheet, the third coming with ten minutes left from a fierce Sasho Dimoski shot.

In the dying minutes, Canberra had at least two chances to finish the game off, but shots from Buljan and Danny Burt were too lame to trouble Pogliacomi.

With only one loss from the last five games, Canberra



Peter Buljan ... scored the all-important goal against Wolves.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 1,678

Referee: J. Tippet

Canberra Cosmos: Knezevic, Popovich, Wilson, Zelic (Purdue HT), Marcina, Buljan, Langone, Miglietti, Roberts, DeJesus (Magnacca 63), Hunter (Burt 71).

Wollongong Wolves: Pogliacomi, Sours, Stanton, Horsley, Brooks (Karavatakis 69), Surjan, Chipperfield, Spencer, Langan, Bishop, Reid (Dimoski 72).

Yellows:

Canberra: Buljan (12), Roberts (72), Langone (90)
Wollongong: Sours (75)

Votes Player of the Year:

3: V. Knezevic (CC)
2: T. Popovich (CC)
1: C. Bishop (WW)

coach Tom Sermanni said "the players battled exceptionally. We got in front and that makes other teams desperate. Wilson played well and his confidence is at an all time high."

Nick Theodorakopoulos stated "it's a familiar story. We dominated territory, we were expected to win, but inconsistency let us down. I just could not single out one player who did well."

MARCONI FINALLY WIN A GAME!

MARCONI FAIRFIELD 2
Care 8, Trajanovski 57
CANBERRA COSMOS 1
De Jesus 76
At Marconi Stadium, Sydney

By John Economos

Marconi, having gone six games without victory, last Saturday night struggled over a courageous Canberra Cosmos 2-1 at the Marconi Stadium to finally break their losing streak.

A goal in each half by Christian Care and Kris Trajanovski, plus a brave block by Marconi's goalkeeper Ante Covic in the dying seconds of the match, cemented the three League points for the home side.

Midfielder Care who had returned from the Viareggio Youth tournament in Italy just the day before, opened the scoreline in the eighth minute with a spectacular strike.

Following a Vlado Zoric corner, Care flicked the ball up and volleyed from the edge of the box to hit the target just inside the first post.

Just a minute prior, Marconi's Marcus Phillips blasted a 30 metre screamer that Canberra's goalie Wilson Knezevic did well whilst back-peddalling to top over his crossbar.

The first session ended with Marconi hanging onto their slender lead whilst Canberra appeared content to sit back and wait to counter.

Twelve minutes after the break Marconi's striker Kris Trajanovski, the most constructive player on the pitch, doubled his team's lead with another great goal.

Attacking midfielder Care spread the ball wide to the left for Brendan Renaud (who was making his comeback from injury after 10 weeks). In a flash Renaud spotted the unmarked Trajanovski on the

back stick to cross to him.

With the entire Canberra defence caught out ball-watching, Trajanovski ghosted in to volley just inside the first post for his 50th goal in the NSL.

With Marconi now leading 2-0, Canberra was left with no option but to come out and try their luck, displaying much more enterprise and enthusiasm, especially through 58th minute substitute Ivo De Jesus.

Marconi seemed to run out of steam and allowed the lads from the National Capital to storm through but without luck.

Trajanovski repeatedly dropped deep to gather possession.

Always unselfish, Trajanovski in the 66th minute struck a violent dipping volley from 22 metres that cannoned off the horizontal.

Canberra's flat-four at the back of Toplica Popovich, Amarildo Miglietti, Gordon Hunter and Lindsay Wilson stood defiantly up to

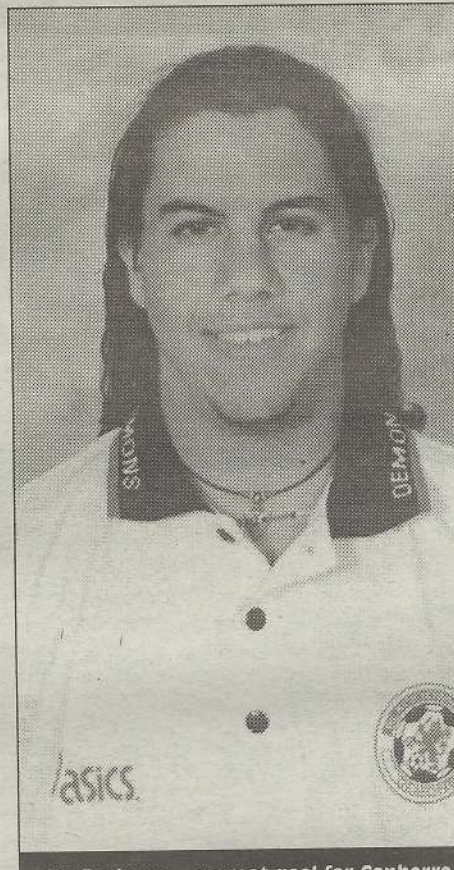
Marconi making it difficult for the strikers to cleanly break through into their box.

But in the 76th minute a bad back-pass from Care to his 'keeper Covic, saw Covic horrifically clear only as far as to the hungry De Jesus. The former Sydney Olympic junior promptly slammed his lethal low drive from 22 metres crisply into the Marconi net.

But De Jesus still wasn't happy with the close scoreline and in the 79th minute cracked another long ranged drive. But unfortunately for the youngster his second effort ricocheted off the base of Marconi's right upright.

With five minutes left on the clock, and despite not having played for 10 weeks, Renaud pushed deep into Canberra's territory to slam a fabulous left footed side-volley that barely screamed outside the right post.

Well into stoppage time Canberra's 64th minute substitute Gabriel Gonzalez, gallantly



Ivo De Jesus ... a great goal for Canberra.



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 3,667

Referee: Brad McKay

Marconi Fairfield: Covic, Gibson, Kim, Farrah (Galluzzo 68), Renaud, Care, Maloney, Phillips, Zoric, Trajanovski, Awaritefe.

Canberra Cosmos: Knezevic, Popovich, Hunter, Miglietti, Wilson, Purdue, Zelic (Magnacca 81), Roberts (De Jesus 58), Langone, Buljan (Gonzalez 64), Musitano.

Player Votes of the Year:

3: Trajanovski (MF)
2: Care (MF)
1: Miglietti (CC)

centreback Buddy Farrah and Renaud came through with their reputations unscathed.

For the plucky Canberrans, midfielder Paul Roberts, defenders Popovich, Hunter, Wilson and Miglietti, plus substitute De Jesus were the best.

It must be highlighted, and to the players' credit, was the fact that Marconi played three of their youngsters (Farrah, Care and Galluzzo) who had only returned to Sydney from Italy the previous night after participating in the Youth tournament at Viareggio.

Canberra's coach Tommy Sermanni, who has done wonders for the team from the national capital since his return from Japan, stated late: "I feel the final result was fair even though we worked hard and gave Marconi a run for their money."

"I thought that Marconi had the bulk of the match and we were still a bit tired from last Monday's match against Wollongong, but overall I was pleased with the effort from my boys."

Meanwhile a relieved Marconi boss Frank Farina who saw three League points for the first time in six weeks go his way, remarked: "A 2-0 I knew it was dangerous scoreline, then they scored."

But at the end of the day we played quite a disciplined game even though we got slack towards the end."



ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 20
12-14 FEBRUARY
1999

THOMAS POWERS OLYMPIC

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2
Kalantzis 24, Cardozo 43
SYDNEY UNITED 1
Ardone 60
At Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic, despite having fiery striker Chris Kalantzis sent off in the 59th minute, was still able to overcome the high flying Sydney United 2-1 last Sunday night climb back into the 'Top Six' and rekindle their League Championship aspirations.

The 24th minute goalscorer went from hero to villain when referee Brett Hugo marched Kalantzis almost on the hour mark for what appeared as lashing out with his arm to strike United's Velimir Kupresak.

United, who have miraculously climbed to second spot on the League ladder, were almost totally choked in

the midfield by Olympic, thus rendering their twin teenage strikers Mile Sterjovski and Joel Griffiths useless.

Playing without right defender David Barrett and sweeper Richard Plesa, United's player-coach David Mitchell, normally a goalscorer, switched himself into the sweeper's role behind central markers Joe Vrkic and Kupresak.

Although Olympic had to battle the last half hour without the red-carded Kalantzis, and United's midfielder Walter Ardone should have considered himself fortunate for not also receiving a similar coloured card.

In the 11th minute, an elbow incident saw Olympic's teenage midfielder Jason Culina felled heavily to the ground clutching his head with both hands.

Ironically United should have drawn first blood as early as in the fifth minute as flank midfielder Steve Berry shaved the far post with his low drive from the left following an Ardone through-ball.

Kalantzis opened the scoring in the 24th minute following a Brett Emerton cross as Vrkic attempted a

bad back pass to his goalkeeper Mike Gibson. Gibson failed to cleanly clear, allowing Kalantzis to swiftly zero in and score.

A hot Emerton angled drive in the 31st minute fired in from the right and towards the far post, was also brilliantly blocked by Gibson.

Two minutes before the break, the National League's top goalscorer Pablo Cardozo scored his 17th goal in 19 matches to double Olympic's lead. A long diagonal ball fired across from the left by Kalantzis, Cardozo managed to magnificently drag it back with his right boot behind the covering stopper Vrkic, before slamming the target with a violent left footed drive from just inside the box.

A minute following Kalantzis' dismissal, Ardone pulled back a great goal for United, blasting a screamer from 22 metres that almost ripped the net.

Olympic's midfield of Emerton, the returned skipper Peter Tsekenis, and Culina, quickly closed down United attacks, with 'Man Of The Match' the dynamic Scotty Thomas, buzzing everywhere with smothering and ball-winning tackles to repeatedly stop United raids.

For the purist this was not an attractive spectacle, but a tight game in which all Olympic players worked very hard to quickly shut out Mitchell's team.

Best for the victors were Thomas, Cardozo, Tsekenis, Baillie and Culina, whilst for United Kupresak Burns and Bennett did well.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 5,107

Referee: B Hugo

Sydney Olympic: Bouhoutsos, Baillie, Blagojevic, Durakovic, Thomas, Jomma (Augerinos 77), Emerton (Brennan 91), Tsekenis, Culina (Tome 89), Cardozo, Kalantzis.

Sydney United: Gibson, Bennet, Vrkic, Kupresak, Mitchell (Townsend 81), Santalab, Berry (Moric 80), Ardone, Burns, Griffiths (Day 69), Sterjovski.

Reds:

Sydney Olympic: Kalantzis 59

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Thomas (Olympic)

2: (Kupresak (United)

1: Cardozo (Olympic)

GLORIOUS DOWNPOUR!

PERTH GLORY 6
Kalogeracos 23, Miller 26, Despotovski 62, 73, 78, Circati 89
BRISBANE STRIKERS 0
At Perth Oval, Perth

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory sent out a powerful message to the other Ericsson Cup title hopefuls after giving Brisbane Strikers a 6-0 thrashing at Perth Oval last Sunday, which included a hat-trick of the highest quality from Bobby Despotovski.

The game was originally billed as a close contest, since the Strikers had come off a 5-1 win over Northern Spirit the previous week and Glory had returned to winning form in Adelaide.

But it didn't eventuate that way when Glory turned on a masterly performance to defeat the Strikers for the first time at home. The 75th minute sending-off of their

captain Glenn Gwynne for an elbow to the face of Despotovski certainly didn't help their cause either.

It was a result that moved Glory into third place on the ladder, three points behind Sydney United who they meet next weekend.

"Apart from the first 15 minutes or so when they looked very nervous, the team managed to display the style similar to that at the beginning of the season", said coach Bernd Stange.

Stange stuck to his word and fielded the same side that beat Adelaide Sharks last weekend, which included Anthony Franken in goal. At first, Glory found themselves up against tough resistance, but they eventually gained the upper hand from the 23rd minute, when Con Boutsianis sent Vas Kalogeracos goalbound. The lively forward finished the move by guiding the ball past Clint Bolton.

Three minutes later, Glory increased their lead when new signing Alistair Edwards centred waist-high off the left-hand byeline to Scott Miller who found the back of the net with a delicate yet deadly volley.

The Glory was dealt a blow ten minutes before half-

time when Kalogeracos limped off. As is turned out, his replacement Bobby Despotovski, who was absent from the last two games through suspension, went on to play a major role in the team's victory.

His 62nd minute opening goal came from a slick build-up along the left flank. Michael Garcia directed a centre to Edwards whose shot was brilliantly stopped by Bolton, and Despotovski was ideally placed to head the rebound into an open net.

The net-buster found the mark again 11 minutes later when Striker's Kasey Wehrman clumsily back-headed a Franken kick into the run of Despotovski who gratefully drilled the ball into the net.

He collected his hat-trick 5 minutes later by pouncing on and putting away another rebound from the goalkeeper, who had first saved a long-range strike from substitute Gareth Naven.

Referee Con Diomis, who generally had a good game, was not in a charitable mood when Despotovski celebrated his hat-trick goal with a section of the crowd, and handed him a yellow card.

The 11,190 crowd went home more than satisfied when a sixth goal was scored a minute from full-time. The scorer was substitute Gianfranco Circati who powered home a breathtaking 25 metre rising rocket past a beaten Bolton.

The closest Brisbane came to finding the net came from a 75th minute Wehrman corner that was glanced

MATCH STATS:

Crowd: 11,190

Referee: C. Diomis

Perth Glory: Franken, Trajkovski, Wilkinson, Miller, Strudwick (Naven 73), Garcia, Boutsianis (Circati 76), Kalogeracos Despotovski 35, Hay, Deans, Edwards.

Brisbane Strikers: Bolton, Gwynne, Zoricich (Davidson 76), Laybutt, Wehrman, McLaren, Srhoj, Harris, Meredith (North 65), Hughes (Kripe 55), Stefanuto.

Yellows

Brisbane Strikers: Harris 13, Hughes 17, Gwynne 68, Srhoj 68

Red: Brisbane Strikers: Gwynne 75

Votes Player of the Year:

3: Miller (Glory)

2: Despotovski (Glory)

1: Garcia (Glory)

by Stuart McLaren toward Steve Laybutt whose goalbound shot was headed off the line by Miller.

UNLUCKY BREAKERS

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0
SOUTH MELBOURNE 0
At Breakers Stadium, Newcastle

By Soccer Weekly

Newcastle Breakers confirmed their status as the most improved side in the country with a tight 0-0 draw against the current champions South Melbourne at a rainy Breakers stadium on Friday night.

This rain may have been the cause of a somewhat disappointing crowd, 5,000 could have been reasonable expected for this marquee game.

Newcastle had three great chances in the first stanza compared to South Melbourne's one in a scrappy first half.

The Breakers dominated the second half with Greg Owens hitting the post while John Buonavoglia missed two one-on-ones with the keeper as well as hitting the side netting from an acute angle.

Breakers' Freddy Umlil also could have scored but he too hit the post.

South Melbourne's only chance was in the 58th minute when young Robert Liparoti blasted wide from 14 yards out.

Considering the Breakers were without Shane Pryce (suspended), Glen Sprod, Andrew Borghetto and Chris Tancheski (all injured) the result had plenty of merit.

John Buonavoglia was again the star for the local side.

After the game Breakers officials felt they had done enough in the second half to take all three points.

It was a good team performance, particularly from Buonavoglia, Sanderson, Shannon, McManus and young Greg Owens.

Looking ahead to next week's game against Gippsland Falcons the club is expecting another tough game against a side that is equally as difficult to beat at home as the Breakers are.

MATCH STATS:

Crowd: 3,789

Referee: J Tippet

Newcastle Breakers: Callin, Roberts, Sanderson, McManus, Ritchie, Wilson, Buonavoglia, Wiczorek, Owens, Shannon, Yoon, Umlil, Haythornthwaite, Ferguson.

South Melbourne: Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Orlic, Panopoulos, Coveny, Trimboli, Curcija, Poljak, Tsekenis, Liparoti, Anastasiadis, Cuzzupe, Mustafa.

Yellow:

Newcastle Breakers: Buonavoglia 88

Votes Player of the Year:

3: Buonavoglia (NB)

2: Sanderson (NB)

1: Petkovic (SM)

KOVACEVIC THE KEY FOR KNIGHTS

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 3
Banini 26, Kelic 66, Pondeljak 73
ADELAIDE CITY 1
Terminello 21
At Knights Stadium, Melbourne

By Soccer Weekly and Ralph Barba

An inspired first half substitution and a return to the attacking philosophy of championship years past, guided a beleaguered Melbourne Knights to a well deserved 3-1 victory over the visiting Adelaide City at Knights Stadium on Sunday.

Knight's coach of two weeks, Josip Biskic, turned the game when he introduced club captain and 100 game hard

man, Ante Kovacevic, to the fray, after young defender, Jason Vukadin was forced from the field due to injury after only 25 minutes. The move served as a catalyst for the Knights, who up until that time, were being overrun by a purposeful and well-drilled Zebra outfit.

Adelaide started brightly with former Knights player, Damian Mori proving a handful for the home team's static and square back four. Good vision by Terminello, Ivanovic and Hassell repeatedly serviced the goal poacher's darting runs and it was only good work by Knights' keeper, Joe Didulica that kept his team in the contest throughout this early stanza.

A superb goal by Tom Pondeljak however rounded off only the Knights' fourth win of the campaign.

"I told the players before the game that only they could change the situation," said Knights coach Josip Biskic of his

side's recent barren run. "And that's what they did, so I'm very pleased for them. We created so many chances and showed a lot of character."

After dominating early, it was City that inevitably took the lead in the 21st minute. David Terminello received the ball on the right flank and his cross/shot went straight into the net past a surprised Knights keeper in Joe Didulica, who had been distracted by Damian Mori's and Ransford Banini's efforts for the ball.

In the 27th minute Kirazoglou helped Banini equalise for Knights. The former's shot was blocked and the ex-Ghana youth Banini finished off.

Efforts by Ante Kovacevic and Ice Kutlesovski early in the second half indicated the change in fortunes. In the 66th minute, the home side gained its reward. Michael Reda's free-kick was blocked by the City wall, but Ivan Kelic blasted the rebound past Socceroo keeper Jason Petkovic.

After 73 minutes, Pondeljak sent the Knights fans wild. The 23-year-old flew in from the left wing with the City defence holding back and walloped a 20-metre shot into the net. Visiting coach, Zoran Matic blamed the loss on his side's lack of work rate and will to win, whilst Knights

MATCH STATS:

Crowd: 2,871

Referee: M Breeze

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, Nastevski, Jolic, Banini, Vukadin, Reda, Kutlesovski, Kelic, Kirazoglou, Susa, Pondeljak, Trupkovic, Dejak, Kovacevic.

Adelaide City: Petkovic, Ivanovic, Tobin, Talladira, Mori, Veart, Costanzo, Hassell, Terminello, Sabljak, Kim, Armour, Stam, Foy.

Yellow: Adelaide City: Foy 77

Votes Player of the Year:

3: Kovacevic(MK)

2: Banini (MK)

1: Kelic (MK)

coach, Josip Biskic was left in no doubt what turned the game for his team. "Kovacevic's entry gave the team a boost. He performed extremely well. It was good to have him back."



ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 20
12-14 FEBRUARY
1999

ZANE SHOWS HIS STYLE AND SPIRIT

NORTHERN SPIRIT 3
ARNOLD 45, Slater 58, Marusic 65
CARLTON SC 1
Lapsansky 19
At North Sydney Oval, Sydney

By Bonnie Mersiades

Love was in the air for some at North Sydney Oval on Valentine's Day Sunday, even if it wasn't between the two teams on the park.

Before kick-off, the disappointing crowd of 8,328 were entertained by the usual Spirit in the Sky skydivers trailing a large flag which asked Donna to marry Paul.

If that wasn't enough, Paul then appeared on the ground with microphone, kneeling to Donna to ask her hand in marriage.

All the married persons yelled out "No, No" while one would-be lover in the crowd cried out "I love you Donna — don't marry him!"

However, no doubt to the relief of Paul, Donna took the microphone and said yes — and then agreed the ceremony should take place when Northern Spirit play Canberra Cosmos on 19 March! That's one way of getting lots of wedding presents.

With Northern Spirit and Carlton coming off losses last week and lying fifth and sixth on the ladder respectively, both teams were keen to regain some winning form and also keep their place in the Top Six.

In the blazing afternoon heat, the game started as a hard-fought duel with neither side giving an inch.

Northern Spirit coach, Graham Arnold, had opted for a three-man attack with Robbie Slater, Kresimir Marusic and Gabriel Mendez, while Carlton played a more traditional 4-4-2 formation with new recruit, Archie Thompson, starting up front with Brazilian Alex Moreira.

Despite some hard running from all three of Northern Spirit's front men, and a genuine attempt on goal from Matthew Langdon in the 19th minute, Northern Spirit showed no real penetration.

Carlton benefited from a superb individual effort from Lupo Lapsansky in the 20th minute when, from about 25 metres out, he hit a ball which shaved the left upright on its way to the back of the net.

Carlton assumed the ascendancy from this point, with Lapsansky, Bresciano and Cervinski combining to control the play, and the nippy Thompson helping to create chances for the visitors up-front.

On the other hand, Northern Spirit appeared a little lethargic in their approach to the ball.

The devoted in the Bob Stand were worrying whether a touch of deja-vu was creeping in from last week's game.

Just as Clayton Zane was seen waiting on the sideline for Northern Spirit's first substitution, Langdon and Enes combined in a neat 'one-two' after a positive passage of play, which resulted in Langdon having another shot on goal which just flashed past Dean Anastasiadis' right upright.

Zane's substitution for Mendez in the 37th minute immediately added some height and menace to Northern Spirit, to the point where Carlton didn't notice Arnold throwing caution to the wind by moving forward from his position as sweeper.

Langdon curled a lay-off from Slater in the vicinity of the lurking Arnie header who, in beating Stergiopoulos, showed everyone on the park just how it's done.

A vintage Arnie header just on half-time, to give both teams some food for thought at the break.

Both teams came out with a bit more bite in the second half. Northern Spirit made their intentions clear through Marusic and Casserly combining cleverly in the first minute for a nice run down the right, to be immediately answered by Carlton pushing forward with otherwise certain goals from Moreira brilliantly saved by Paul Henderson.

Zane, displaying the type of form which has gained him national honours, showed aggression and confidence on the ball. His great run down the middle of the park before flicking a pass to Marusic on the right, resulted in the second Spirit goal in the 60th minute when the ever-dangerous Slater slotted home Marusic's cross — a superb passage of play.

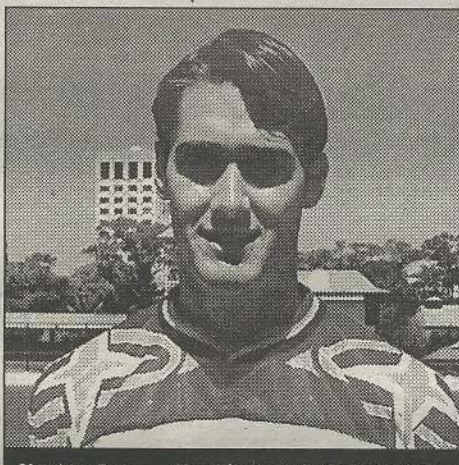
The third, and decisive, goal from Northern Spirit came six minutes later when Zane received a long ball from around the half-way line, centred it to Slater who laid it back to Marusic who picked the spot to beat a diving Anastasiadis.

After the devastating 1-5 loss last week, this would have been a particularly pleasing team goal for the Spirit.

The remainder of the match was played out with intensity from both sides, but Carlton appeared not to have any answers to the two goal deficit. While Carlton's midfield showed plenty of skill, and Thompson worked hard up-front, their share of possession was not able to penetrate Northern Spirit's solid defence.

Carlton coach, Eddie Krncevic, said some of his players were "not good enough" to take to the next level. Without elaborating, Krncevic said it may be time for him to start looking to young players to help the team out of its current disappointing run of results.

"We have two home games (against Brisbane and Sydney United) over the next two weeks and it's essential that we get a positive result out of both games," said Krncevic.



Clayton Zane ... the big man is back in form.

"We're a good footballing side and with Simon (Colosimo) and Sean (Douglas) back from suspension, we should turn today's effort around."

Northern Spirit coach, Graham Arnold, was relieved after last week's drubbing in Brisbane.

"Last week was a one-off. I could have made them all go down the beach and run for hours in the sand, but that's not what we needed. We just had a bad day, and today showed that we recovered well."

MATCH STATS

Crowd: 8,328

Referee: Simon Micallef

Northern Spirit: Henderson, Rudan, Casserly, Marusic (Watkins 80), Slater, Arnold, Mendez (Zane 37), Bilokapic, Cunico, Langdon, Enes (Boznar 82)

Carlton SC: Anastasiadis, Anthopoulos, Stergiopoulos (Grbac, 80), Marth, Bresciano, Atkinson, Moreira, Lapsansky, Thompson, Tricarico (Della Rocca 80), Cervinski (Markovac 82)

Yellows:

Northern Spirit: Marth, Tricarico, Marusic, Rudan

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Marusic (NS)
2: Lapsansky (C)
1: Henderson (NS)

He said it was good to go into the half-time break at 1-1.

"That made for a positive dressing room at half-time after such oppressive conditions and we were confident of being able to go on from there."

In next week's match against the Melbourne Knights in Melbourne, the Spirit will be without playmaker, Kresimir Marusic, due to automatic suspension from four yellow cards.

Arnold saved his biggest serve for the television arrangements which saw a drop in Northern Spirit's crowd from their average of almost 15,500 to 8,328.

"That means \$40,000 in gate takings alone for us because we had to play at 5.00pm on a Sunday instead of our usual time of 7.30pm on Friday."

In summary, the match was a good contest between two skilled and professional outfits. Northern Spirit deserved their win, but the 3-1 scoreline belies the evenness of the contest.

This victory also gives Northern Spirit their first prize in the NSL — the inaugural Sydney Cup competition between the four Sydney-based teams over the past few weeks' series of derbies.

STAY OF EXECUTION FOR SHARKS

ADELAIDE SHARKS 0
GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0
At Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide

By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell

Would the game go on? No one knew the outcome of a special meeting called by the Sharks on Sunday afternoon to decide the club's future.

Rumours were rife that the players were still unhappy and would not take to the pitch. But take to the pitch they did and broke their losing streak.

New coach Adrian Santrac was happy with his side's first clean sheet since December, while later reports indicated that the Sharks' financial problems had been solved and the club is definitely here to stay.

As the deep blue of a perfect summer evening sky settled like a velvety blanket on the Adelaide hills, the Sharks and the Falcons settled down to business on the green Hindmarsh pitch.

Both sides had problems keeping their feet and keeping the ball in play on the slightly

damp, fast-running surface. This was a game of missed opportunities, full of endeavor but lacking a killer punch.

Highlight of the game was the midfield duel between 88.5 Coast FM Player of the Match Richie Alagich, and Falcons' best player Will Hastie. These two were the driving forces all night.

The Sharks could have scored in the first minute. Paul Pezos headed goalward from 12 metres on the right into the path of Hamilton Thorp, but Thorp flung a foot toward Falcons' keeper Bojo Jevdjovic's face in an attempt to connect with the ball, resulting in a free kick. Jevdjovic put his

life on the line again to save off Derek Poimer's boot in the 15th minute.

His resultant clearance gave Gippsland their first chance of the match. Some slick passing between Clayton Bell, Will Hastie and Adrian Savage down the right forced the Sharks onto the back foot. Con Kokkinopolitis passed back to keeper David Miller, who kicked the ball straight into the advancing Sasha Becvinovski.

Luckily for the Sharks, Pezos cleared the ricochet. The fans called for the ambulance in the second half, as many suffered heart failure when Miller again kicked a clearance straight into a Falcon.

The ball slammed into the back of substitute Brian MacNicol just outside the 18 yard box and rebounded goalward. Fortunately for the Sharks, Miller caught the unwitting shot.

Gippsland's best chance to score came in the 20th minute. Hastie passed to Bell in the centre, who passed to Savage wide on the right. Savage crossed high into the box, Becvinovski flicked the ball on to Perinovic unmarked only 10 yards out, but Perinovic headed high over the bar.

Alagich replied for the Sharks with a 25 metre screamer after a patient build up between himself, Thorp, Poimer and Branko Milosevic, but his shot too went over the bar.

He threatened to score throughout the game, keeping Jevdjovic busy. Poimer came closest for the Sharks with what looked an unstoppable powerball right on half time.

His shot was headed for the top of the net, but Jevdjovic had other ideas, leaping to tip the ball over the bar.

Gippsland coach Stuart Munro could have problems next week. Cautions to Bell, Hastie and



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: Official 1,968

Referee: Sam Hasic

Adelaide Sharks: Miller, Pezos, Souris, Kuzmanovic Kokkinopolitis, Tibaldi, Alagich, Milosevic (Castro 73), Artone (Gibson 63), Poimer, Thorp (Duric 33)

Gippsland Falcons: Jevdjovic, Anderson, Hopkins, Osman, Bell (Vargas 83), Hutchinson, Perinovic (MacNicol 83), Hastie, Puca, Savage, Becvinovski

Yellows:

Adelaide Sharks: Tibaldi, Gibson
Gippsland Falcons: Bell, Hastie, MacNicol

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Richie Alagich (Sharks)
2: Will Hastie (Falcons)
1: Adrian Savage (Falcons)

MacNicol mean all three will miss the match through suspension. Despite this, Munro said after the game he thought the referee was one of the better ones he'd seen this season.

National Youth League

Compiled by Roy Hay and proudly sponsored by Prestige Wedding and Function Centre,
Vivid Expressions Photography and Argon Video Productions

SOUTHERN DIVISION

Round 20

Bulleen Inter	6	Albury Wodonga	1
Melbourne Knights	2	VIS	3
South Melbourne	1	Gippsland Falcons	0

Carlton v Bye

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	16	10	3	3	29	15	33
Carlton	14	9	2	3	41	16	29
VIS	14	8	3	3	28	21	27
Gippsland Falcons	15	6	2	7	23	24	20
Melbourne Knights	15	5	3	7	26	29	18
Bulleen Inter Kings	14	5	2	7	19	24	17
Albury Wodonga	14	0	1	13	14	51	1

Round 21

Thursday 18 February

Bulleen Inter v VIS,
(Veneto Park, 7pm)

Sunday 21 February

South Melbourne v Albury Wodonga,
(Bob Jane Stadium, 3.30 pm)
Gippsland Falcons v Carlton,
(Mobil Park, 4.30 pm)
Bye v Melbourne Knights

LEADING SOUTHERN SCORERS

Andrew Mashoian	South Melbourne	11
Jovanco Novacevski	Carlton	6
Scott McDonald	VIS	6
Deniz Ekicic	Carlton	5
Tony Ouharis	Carlton	5
Erhan Bayraktar	South Melbourne	5

NORTHERN SUMMARY

In the last of the Round 19 matches played last Monday, ACTAS caused a big surprise with a three-nil win over Wollongong Wolves. Michael Musitano scored twice and Williams scored the third.

Newcastle Breakers opened Round 20 on Friday with a four-one win over Sydney Olympic Academy. An own goal started the scoring for Newcastle, then Peter Juchniewicz made it two in 35 minutes. Chris Seitas pulled a goal back for the Academy a minute later. Josh Maguire's penalty made it three-one for Newcastle in forty minutes, and Tony Madjurovski completed the scoring with Newcastle's fourth two minutes after the break.

NSW Institute of Sport beat Marconi Colts by two goals to nil, but it was level pegging till ten minutes to go when Tallan Martin broke through from a pass by Simon Catanzaro.

Nahuel Arrarte made the points secure in 85 minutes. The Institute has been using some excellent fourteen and fifteen year olds in recent games including Michael Brown, Nick Vagenas and Leighal Dellis. Marconi's Anthony Mondello caused headaches all day for the NSWIS defence.

Queensland Academy of Sport had a good three-nil away win over Sydney United Colts. Chay Hews, Shane Smeltz and Allan Cameron scored the goals.

The Australian Institute of Sport beat Northern Spirit 2-0 at Cromer Park with goals by Elias Dimourtzidis and Ivan Ergic.

Wollongong Wolves Colts and Northern Spirit Colts drew 2-2 in a tightly contested match, which set some

sort of record with fifteen yellow cards, but both sides report that it was not a dirty game. Igor Cankulovski and Steve Markovski scored for Wolves and Ian Church and Matthew Roberts for Spirit.

Finally Sydney Olympic beat Sydney United by three goals to two. Adrian Cervinski banged in two goals for Olympic and Peter Zorbas scored another cracker. Olympic lost concentration later and United came back with goals by Daniel Kukucka and Joe Caleta, but Olympic hung on to keep second spot on the ladder.

SOUTHERN SUMMARY

The Victorian Institute of Sport came from behind to beat the Melbourne Knights by three goals to two in an entertaining match played in extreme heat at Knights Stadium.

Chris Tabak finished off good work by Serdar Bol in the fifth minute to give the Knights an excellent start, but ten minutes later Scott McDonald fired in a pile-driver from all of 30 metres which flew over Andrew Belaich and crashed against the bar.

Naum Sekulovski reacted fastest to put the rebound away for the VIS. Sekulovski had a hand in the VIS's second goal on the hour setting up Angelo Motsiopoulos for a neat finish in which he lifted the ball over the diving keeper.

Motsiopoulos made it three in 83 minutes running on to a loose ball and rounding Belaich. The Knights would not give up and Ivica Kolceg curled a free kick around the wall for a fine goal, but the Knights could not find an equaliser in the few minutes left. See VIS story on page six.

NORTHERN DIVISION

Round 20

Newcastle Breakers	4	Sydney Olympic Academy	1
NSWIS	2	Marconi Fairfield Colts	0
Sydney United Colts	0	QAS	3
Northern Spirit	0	AIS	2
Wollongong Wolves Colts	2	Northern Spirit Colts	2
Sydney Olympic	3	Sydney United	2
Marconi Fairfield	1	ACTAS	0

Wollongong Wolves v Bye

Round 19

ACTAS	3	Wollongong Wolves	0
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League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIS	18	12	5	1	71	12	41
Sydney Olympic	18	12	2	4	48	20	38
Northern Spirit	18	11	2	5	32	17	35
Newcastle Breakers	18	11	4	3	38	18	37
Marconi Fairfield	15	9	5	1	46	12	32
QAS	17	11	1	5	50	21	34
Wollongong Wolves	16	10	1	5	34	16	31
NSWIS	16	10	3	3	39	12	33
Sydney United	18	7	4	7	33	27	25
Marconi Fairfield Colts	18	5	3	10	16	30	18
ACTAS	18	4	2	12	26	44	14
Sydney United Colts	17	4	0	13	18	51	12
Northern Spirit Colts	17	2	3	12	16	72	9
Sydney Olympic Academy	18	1	3	14	13	59	6
Wollongong Wolves Colts	18	1	2	15	10	79	5

Tuesday 16 February

Newcastle Breakers v NSWIS,
(Round 11 catch-up game,
Breakers Stadium, 7 pm)

AIS v Wollongong Wolves,
(Round 1 catch-up game, AIS
Soccer Field, 6 pm)

Round 21

Saturday 20 February

AIS v QAS,
(AIS Soccer Field, 7 pm)

Northern Spirit Colts v Newcastle Breakers,
(Christie Park, 4pm)

Sydney United v Sydney United Colts,
(Edensor Park, 5 pm)

NSWIS v Northern Spirit,
(Valentine Park, 6 pm)

Sunday 21 February

Marconi Fairfield Colts v Wollongong Wolves,
(Marconi Stadium, 5 pm)

Sydney Olympic Academy v Marconi Fairfield,
(Wentworth Park, 5 pm)

Monday 22 February

ACTAS v Sydney Olympic,
(Bruce Stadium, 4.30 pm)
Bye v Wollongong Wolves Colts

LEADING NORTHERN SCORERS

Mark Hagger	Marconi	15
Russell Miner	QAS	12
Simon Catanzaro	NSWIS	9
Kevo Guleserian	AIS	9
Daniel Kukucka	Sydney United	9
Anthony Mondello	Marconi Colts	8
Anthony Bauer	Newcastle Breakers	8
Chad Mansley	Newcastle Breakers	8
Paul Tuturevski	Wollongong Wolves	8

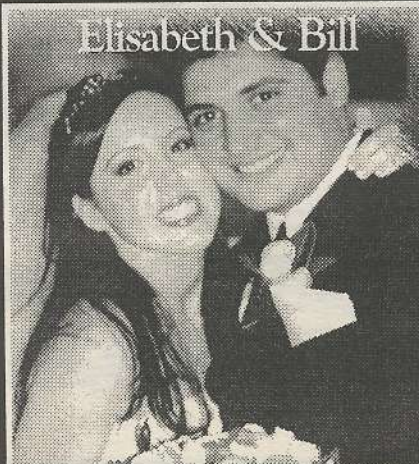
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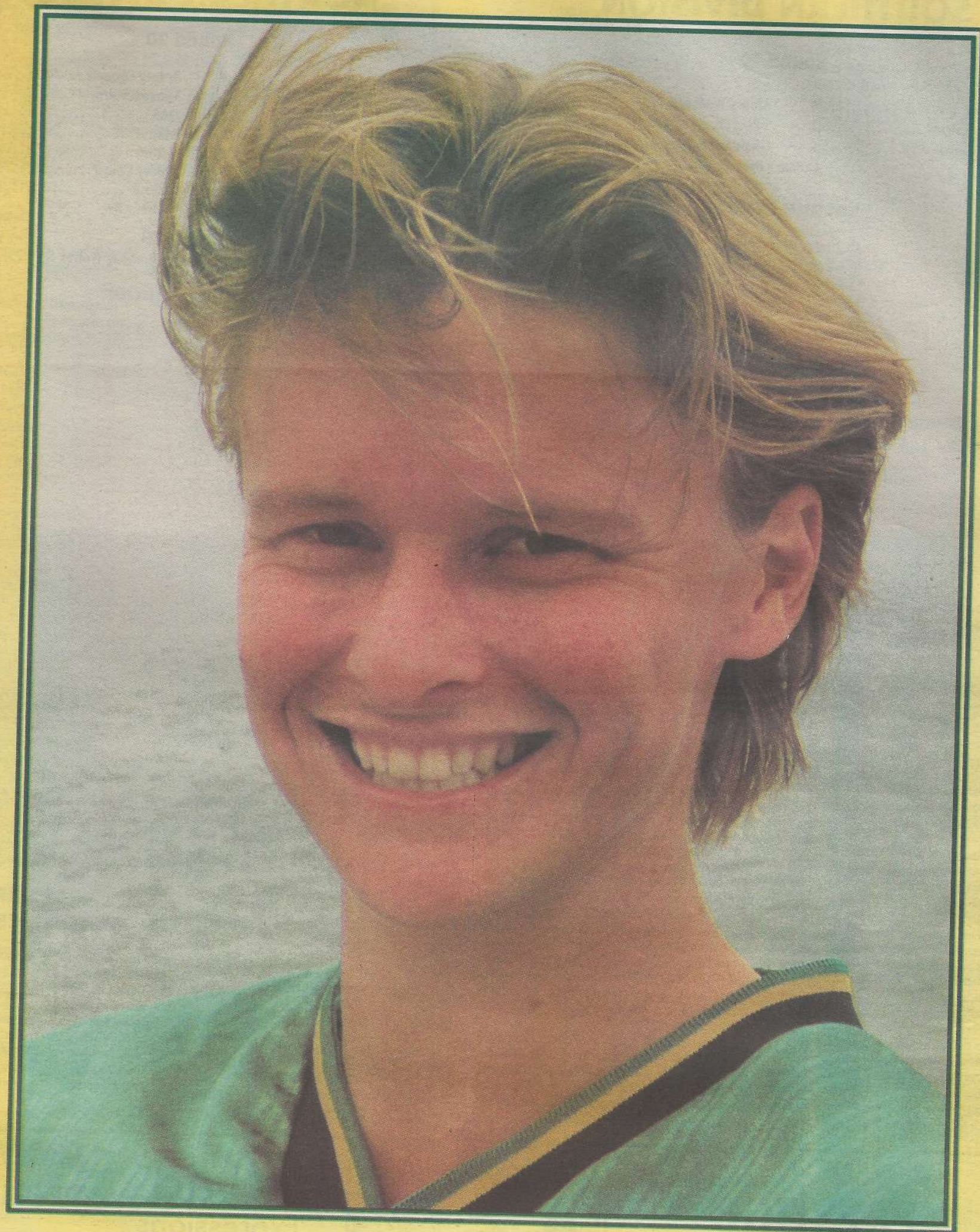
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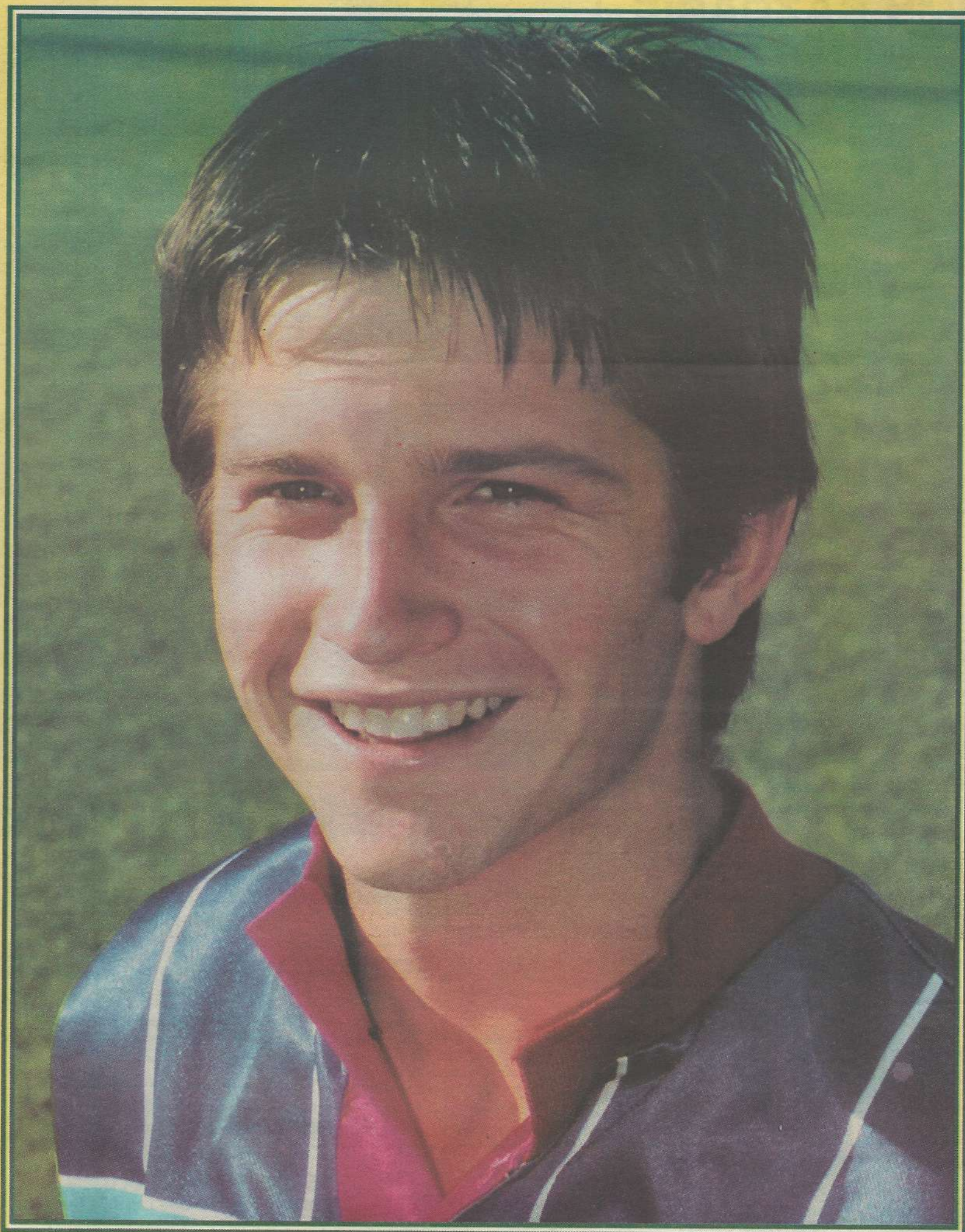
JULIE MURRAY PIC BY MELBIN

AUSTRALIAN SOCCER



JULIE MURRAY
MATILDA &
1999 FIFA ALL-STARS

SOCCER STARS OF '99



GREG OWENS

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

1999 SOCCER WEEKLY TIP FOR THE FUTURE

NSW SUPER LEAGUE

SUPER LEAGUE STAR TOMMY BAZDARIC (LEICHHARDT TIGERS)

Date Of Birth: June 1, 1973.
Birthplace: Sydney.
Previous Clubs: Macarthur Rams,
Wollongong City, Sydney United.
Current Club: Leichhardt Tigers.
Current Position: Right or central
defender.
Nickname: 'Tome'.
Occupation: Builder.
Best Aspect Of Your Game:
Competitive, ability to score,
disciplined attitude.

Most Difficult Opponent:
Mark Viduka and Warren Spink.

Most Impressive Local Player:
Paul Trimboli, John Markovski.

Favourite Overseas Player:
Dennis Bergkamp (Arsenal and Holland).

Favourite Overseas Club: Inter Milan and Liverpool.
What Qualities Make For A Good Coach: To have the ability to
command full respect of all his players. To be a good and positive motivator
as well as to be able to obtain the best out of all his players.

Ambitions For 1999: To win the League championship with the Tigers and
hopefully then play in the NSL.

Most Memorable Moment: Meeting my girlfriend Reka.
Hobbies Outside Soccer: Golf, fishing and holidaying.

Best Goal You've Seen Scored: Marco Van Basten's Euro 1988 goal in
Final vs Russia.

Favourite Food: All Mexican.

Favourite Drink: Jack Daniel's straight.

Car You Drive: Eunos.

Favourite TV Show: Jerry Seinfeld.

TV Show You Refuse To Watch: All soapies and The Footy Show.

Favourite Movie: Forrest Gump.

Favourite Actor-Actress: Michael Keaton and Bette Midler.

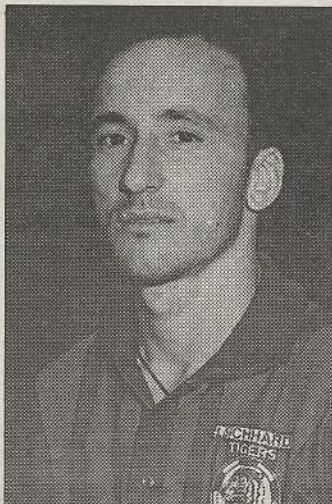
Preferred Music: Dance music.

Least Preferred Music: None really.

Favourite Comedian: Seinfeld and Homer Simpson.

Pet Hates: Arrogant people.

Person You Would Like To Meet: Elvis Presley (the King).



SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Macarthur Rams	2	2	0	0	7	3	4	6
Canterbury M'ville	2	1	1	0	6	2	4	4
Leichhardt Tigers	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	4
Fairfield Bulls	2	1	1	0	5	3	2	4
Blackburn City D	2	1	0	1	4	3	1	3
Bankstown City L	2	1	0	1	6	7	-1	3
Central Coast	2	1	0	1	3	5	-3	3
Parramatta Eagles	2	1	1	0	2	1	0	3
Sutherland Sharks	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1	1
Bonnyrigg WE	2	0	1	1	4	7	-3	1
Ryde City	2	0	0	2	2	5	-2	0
Eastern Suburbs	2	0	0	2	1	4	-3	0

Canterbury M'ville	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	3
Fairfield Bulls	2	1	0	1	2	2	0	3
Sutherland Sharks	2	1	0	1	2	2	0	3
Central Coast	2	1	0	1	2	2	0	3
Blacktown City D	2	1	0	1	3	4	-1	3
Eastern Suburbs	2	1	0	1	2	3	-1	3
Leichhardt Tigers	2	0	1	1	4	5	-1	1
Ryde City	2	0	0	2	2	4	-2	0
Bankstown City Lions	2	0	0	2	0	6	-6	0

UNDER 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Canterbury M'ville	2	2	0	0	8	3	5	6
Leichhardt Tigers	2	2	0	0	3	1	2	6
Bankstown City Lions	2	1	0	1	6	5	1	3
Central Coast	2	1	0	1	3	2	1	3
Macarthur Rams	2	1	0	1	3	2	1	3
Parramatta Eagles	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	3
Ryde City	2	1	0	1	2	2	0	3
Bonnyrigg WE	2	1	0	1	4	5	-1	3
Sutherland Sharks	2	1	0	1	3	5	-2	3
Eastern Suburbs	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1	1
Blacktown City D	2	0	1	1	1	4	-3	1
Fairfield Bulls	2	0	0	2	1	5	-4	0

UNDER 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Bonnyrigg WE	2	2	0	0	5	0	5	6
Macarthur Rams	2	2	0	0	5	1	4	6
Parramatta Eagles	2	1	1	0	5	4	1	4



Bonnyrigg White Eagles ... picked up their first points of season.

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE Results

Round



Two

MACARTHUR RAMS Own goal 12m K Rastal 39m R Lloyd 75m	3	BLACKTOWN CITY J Angelucci 41m D Foxe 43m	2
SUTHERLAND SHARKS L Stephens 65m	1	CENTRAL COAST N Byrn 7m P Presta 33m	2
BANKSTOWN LIONS M Todorovski 20m	1	CANTERBURY M'VILLE N Bosevski 53/85 J Talcevski 67/70m Zilic 77m	5
PARRAMATTA EAGLES	2	RYDE CITY	1
EASTERN SUBURBS S McCombe 34m	1	LEICHHARDT TIGERS C Bedtzaric 12m S Boudaher 87m	2
FAIRFIELD BULLS	2	BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES	2

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND



THREE

Saturday 20th February

Blacktown City Demons v Sutherland Sharks

Gabbie Stadium, 6:00pm

Bonnyrigg White Eagles vs Parramatta Eagles

Serbian Centre, 6:00pm

Sunday 21st February

Bankstown City Lions vs Fairfield Bulls

Jensen Park, 5:00pm

Ryde City vs Eastern Suburbs

Wentworth Park, 3:00pm

Leichhardt Tigers vs Macarthur Rams

Lambert Park, 5:00pm

Canterbury Marrickville vs Central Coast

Henson Park, 6:00pm

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PREMIER LEAGUE



KEEPER SCORES!

FAWKNER BLUES 2 GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS 3

By Soccer Weekly

Green Gully Cavaliers survived a strong second half come-back by Fawknor Blues to win 3-2 at Smith Reserve on Sunday.

The Cavaliers went 3-0 ahead in the opening 20 minutes but the home side stormed back in the second period.

Tony Neceski gave Gully the lead in the 8th minute when he seized on a poor defensive clearance to smash the ball high into the net.

That lead was doubled just four minutes later when Zdravko Atanasovski, set up by Nick Papadopoulos, volleyed home from 25 metres.

George Georgiadis gave the visitors a 3-0 advantage in the 20th minute when he ran on to a Zlatko Donev through ball to score past Maurice Gonzalez.

Tom Simsek gave the Blues some hope with a goal at the start of the second half.

Simsek, sent clear by Ivan Duzel, produced a low shot that was too good for Chris Vella in the Cavaliers goal.

Fawknor continued to pressure Green Gully, but didn't get a second goal until the 89th minute.

Reserve goalkeeper, Manny Papas, sent on for the injured Enzo De Santis, scored his first Premier League goal when he slotted in a loose ball through a crowded area.

Blues: Gonzalez, Tramontana, Grimaud, P.Ferrante, Schipano, V.Ferrante, Bordignon (Alexopoulos), De Santis (Papas), Sterjovski (Di Sauro), Duzel, Simsek.

Cavaliers: Vella, Atanasovski, Dimitrelos (Spiteri), Douglas, Mangos, Markovski, Genovesi, Donev (Vassallo), Neceski, Georgiadis.

Referee: Perry Mur

Votes: 3- Markovski (GG), 2- Atanasovski (GG), 1- Duzel (FB)

SAINTS OFF MARK

ALTONA EAST 0 ST ALBANS SAINTS 2

By John Rigas

Last season's Grand Finalists, St Albans Saints, notched their first victory of the campaign with a 2-0 win over newcomers Altona East.

It was the home sides first loss of the year, after impressive wins the opening two rounds over Sunshine Georgies and Altona Magic.

Altona were the better side in the opening twenty minutes with George Angelos creating most of the problems with strikes on goal in the 10th and 15th minutes.

Flamboyant striker, Harry Karl, opened the scoring for the Saints in the 20th minute when he

controlled a cross ball to drill home from close range.

A well rehearsed free kick increased the score for the Saints when Branko Bacak powered the ball past goalkeeper John Chalamandaras in the 60th minute.

Altona, looking for a consolation goal, came close when skipper Steve Bartol shot narrowly wide from the edge of the area in the 68th minute.

East: Chalamandaras, R.Antoniadis, Salpingidis, Kapulica, Xydias (De Amicis), Donnelly, T.Antoniadis, Groidis (Verikakis), Bartol, Papadopoulos (Malliaras), Angelos.

Saints: Vunderl, Raspudic, Colina, Karl, Dragicevic, Bacak, K.Razov, Clarica, Vojtek, Vidakovic, Movric (I.Razov).

Referee: Carlo Graser

Votes: 3- Chalamandaras (AE), 2- Bartol (AE), 1- Raspudic (StA)

CONTROVERSY AT GREENS

BENTLEIGH GREENS 1 MELBOURNE RAIDERS 1

By Chris Elysee

Melbourne Raiders gained a much deserved point away to Bentleigh Greens, 1-1, in a game they were much equipped to win.

Played in scorching conditions in front of an estimated crowd of 700 people, the Raiders got many of the more appealing opportunities of the game.

However, they were kept at bay by the Greens defence, capably led by man-of-the-match Theo Constantinou and captain Stelios Drakos.

Bentleigh started the more aggressive of the two teams with an early chance for David Grella that rolled just inches wide of a beaten Mauro Raponi in the Raiders goal.

Second half substitute Mohammed El Kersh made his presence felt when he came on but Bentleigh showed the class side they are with Cameron Pino rising to the occasion providing some inviting crosses that just failed to find their targets.

The deadlock was nearly broken after Constantinou released substitute John Papettas whose low cross into the box was just missed by a diving Juan Nilo.

Bentleigh's controversial goal was scored in the 79th minute when Constantinou found Papettas whose first time header was saved by Raponi, the resultant rebound seemed to strike Papettas' hand before he slotted it home amid howls of protest by the Raiders players.

This adjudication seemed to spur the Raiders on to bigger and better things. Pressing for a result in the last ten minutes they were duly rewarded deep into stoppage time when Nick Cuculevski's incisive run into the box was harshly stopped by a crude Karapatsos tackle.

Referee Robert Ince gave the penalty and cool-headed Pino Corallo stepped up and converted the spot kick to leave honours even at the full time whistle.

Greens: Tsianakas, Karapatsos, Micheil, McDonagh (Kalimeris), Constantinou, Drakos, Kourkoutzelos, Lenetis (Papettas), Pino (Kotsovolos), Nilo, Grella.

Raiders: Raponi, Boschini, Nedanovski (El Kersh), Anastasiou, Kitanovski, Angelovski, Iacovitti, Slifkas (Grganovic), Gasparini (De Propertis), Corallo, Cuculevski.

Referee: Robert Ince

Votes: 3- Constantinou (BG), 2- Slifkas (MR), 1- El Kersh (MR)

SHARKS LOOK DANGEROUS

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 2 SUNSHINE GEORGIES 0

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Port Melbourne Sharks recorded their third victory in as many games, defeating Sunshine Georgies 2-0 on Sunday.

The margin could have been far greater, the Sharks finishing was not at its best and Georgies' keeper Steve Wardle made a string of important saves.

The Georgies, a young and relatively inexperienced side, hardly troubled the Sharks and it was evident from early on that they were in for a tough day when Peter Kakos headed a Jim Latinopoulos cross against the post in the 6th minute.

Nothing could help the Georgies four minutes later however when Kakos this time found the target.

Nick Tsaltas fed John Pappas whose lob was palmed up into the air by Wardle, and Kakos had the simple task of nodding the ball into the empty net.

The floodgates didn't open though, chances for Kakos in particular were coming often, but Wardle and some shyness in front of goal kept the Georgies in the game.

Just five minutes into the second half the Sharks increased their advantage.

Tsaltas' cross was intended for Kakos and when he missed his kick, Pappas was there to steer the ball home.

Time and again Port broke the Georgies defence down too easily and although the chances continued to come thick and fast, the Sharks continued to miss them.

Sharks: Cooper, Knezevic, Pappas, Latinopoulos, Vargas, Heath, Kakos, Tsaltas, Tzirtis (Jackson), Caimakamis (Palatsides), Palamaras.

Georgies: Wardle, Vera (Olguin), Elvin, Bot (Sacco), Debono, Rozanitis, Hermosilla, Kindtner, Tokogliou (Monitto), Cassar, Stojilkovski.

Referee: Hakan Anaz

Votes: 3- Tsaltas (PM), 2- Latinopoulos (PM), 1- Wardle (SG)

NOT SO MAGIC

PRESTON LIONS 3 ALTONA MAGIC 0

By George Koukeris

At Goodyear Stadium on Sunday, Altona Magic succumbed to a 0-3 loss at the hands of a very persistent Preston Lions.

The Lions never gave up in the sweltering heat, holding ground in defence to shut out any attempt from the Magic.

Preston pulled away early in the game, persistently trying to break through the defence for a chance to take the lead before the half time break.

In the second half, things cooled down considerably, especially the weather.

Lions coach Vlado Vanis realised the opposition's weakness in the heat and brought on Preston's well known 'super-sub', Sasho Slavevski.

The tiny all rounder made his mark on the game

in the 64th minute with a brilliant steal of the ball and then quickly dashed through the defence to break the deadlock.

Slavevski's goal rejuvenated the Lions who took full advantage of the situation to completely shut Altona out of the game.

Ten minutes later, the Lions were two up after an impressive goal from Warren Spink inside the penalty area.

A third goal from Tony Talevski in the last minute nailed the coffin for the Magic, their third loss in succession.

Lions: Acevski, Kovacic (Slavevski), Lisolajski, Ogenovski, Spink, Simsek, Stojcevski (Talevski), Emsovski, Smirnis (Burlak), Graham, Markovski.

Magic: McGrath, Cergovski, Tasevski (Bogdanovski), Bizimovski, Micevski, T.Markovski, Nedza (S.Markovski), Ashton, Velkovski, Petrevski, Sapazovski.

Votes: 3- Spink (PL), 2- Slavevski (PL), 1- Emsovski (PL)

ROUND 2 DETAILS (MONDAY NIGHT ROUND)

Westvale 3 (Goutzioulis, Nunez, Stubbins) - Bulleen Inter Kings 3 (Gnjidic 3)
Votes : 3- Gnjidic (BK), 2- Stubbins (W), 1- Babic (BK)

ROUND 3

Fawknor Blues 2 - Green Gully Cavaliers 3
Bentleigh Greens 1 - Melbourne Raiders 1
Altona East 0 - St Albans Saints 2
Preston Lions 3 - Altona Magic 0
Port Melbourne Sharks 2 - Sunshine Georgies 0



VicHealth

ROUND 4 FIXTURES

Friday February 19

St Albans Saints v Preston Lions - kick off 8.15pm at Knights Stadium

Saturday February 20

Altona Magic v Port Melbourne Sharks - kick off 7pm at Paisley Park
South Dandenong v Fawknor Blues - kick off 6pm at George Andrews Reserve

Sunday February 21

Springvale White Eagles v Westvale - kick off 6pm at Serbian Sports Centre
Sunshine Georgies v Bulleen Inter Kings - kick off 6pm at Chaplin Reserve

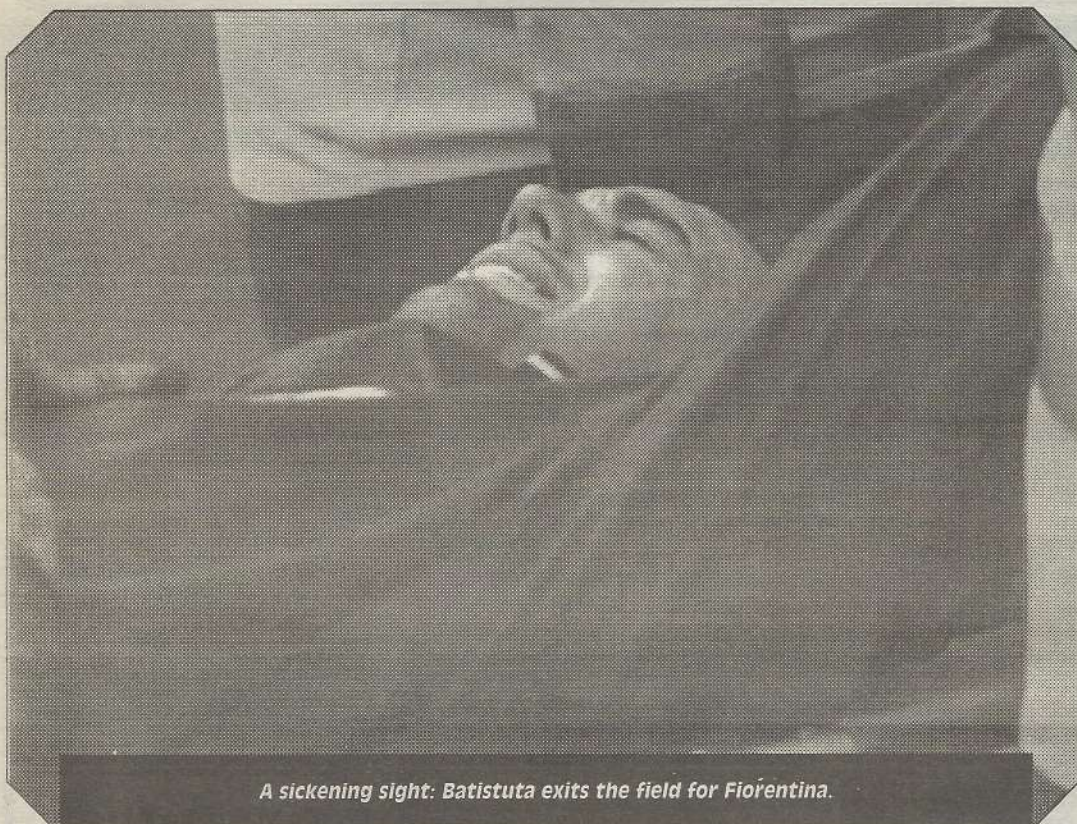
Melbourne Raiders v Altona East - kick off 6pm at Partridge Reserve.

Monday February 22

Green Gully Cavaliers v Bentleigh Greens - kick off 8.15pm at Green Gully Reserve

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Port Melbourne Sharks	3	3	0	0	10	2	9
Bentleigh Greens	3	2	1	0	9	1	7
Green Gully Cavaliers	3	2	1	0	7	5	7
Preston Lions	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
Altona East	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Melbourne Raiders	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Fawknor Blues	3	1	0	2	7	6	3
Sunshine Georgies	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
St Albans Saints	3	1	0	2	3	7	3
Bulleen Inter Kings	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
South Dandenong	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Westvale	2	0	1	1	4	9	1
Springvale White Eagles	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
Altona Magic	3	0	0	3	1	10	0

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A sickening sight: Batistuta exits the field for Fiorentina.



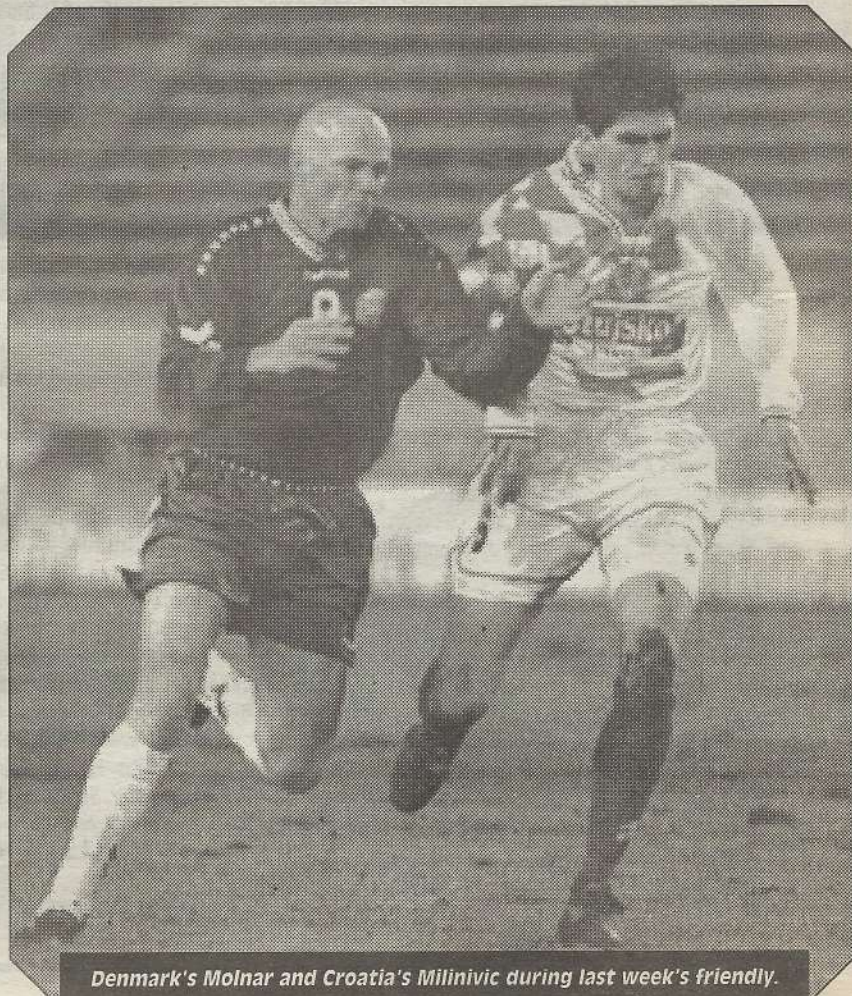
Celta Vigo's Brazilian Mazinho (r) in action in the Spanish Primera. Europe pages are on 23, 25 & 26.



Norway's Man United Super-Sub Ole Gunnar Solksjaer with Italy's Fabio Cannavaro in a friendly last week.



France's Pires against England's Anderton and Le Saux. The French won 2-0.



Denmark's Molnar and Croatia's Milinovic during last week's friendly.

Compiled by

AMERICAS

Soccer Weekly

YOUNG PELE ON TRIAL FOR MURDER

The son of Brazilian legend Pelé is to be tried for murder, his lawyer said on Friday.

Pelé's son, Edilson Cholbi do Nascimento, 27, and Marcilio Jose Marinho de Melo, 24, are accused of killing a motorcyclist by smashing into him when racing their cars, said Vicente Cascione.

Pedro Simoes Neto, a 50-year-old retiree, was thrown from his motorcycle and killed in Oct. 1992 in Santos, a port town 48 miles southeast of Sao Paulo, said Cascione.

"I will prove that Pelé's son had nothing to do with this car race," Cascione said. "He passed by after the crash had happened and actually stopped his car and tried to help the victim. I think witnesses got the wrong impression."

Cascione alleged that Melo had run into the motorcyclist but "was not to blame" for his death.

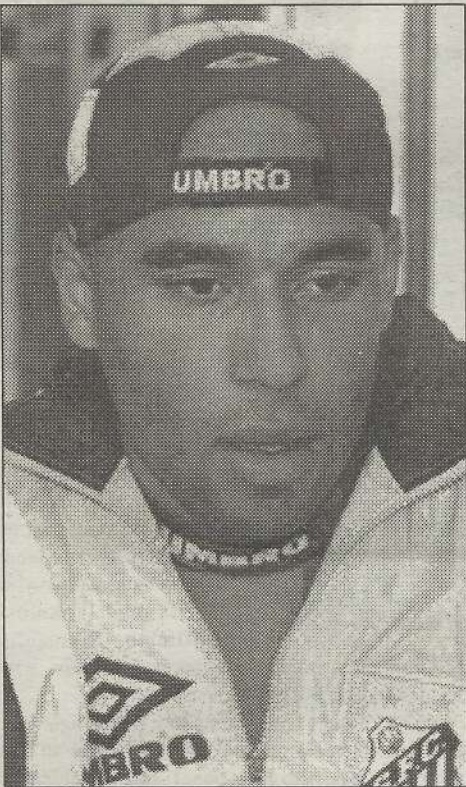
"It was an accident caused by the imprudence of the motorcyclist," alleged Cascione. "He went over a cross-roads without stopping when Melo's car was crossing."

Nascimento and Melo will be tried by a jury at a court in Santos probably in May, said Cascione, who will only represent Nascimento.

"Most of the time this kind of accident would be seen as involuntary manslaughter," said Cascione. "But it's a trend in Brazil that death by imprudent driving is considered as murder."

Nascimento is a reserve team goalie for Santos, the Brazilian first division side his father used to play for.

Pelé's given name is Edson Arantes do Nascimento.



Pelé's son, Edilson Cholbi do Nascimento.

BRAZIL FACTS

The only nation to enter every single World Cup, Brasil won its first World Cup in Sweden in 1958 — one tie and five victories. Spear-heading a devastating offense that often lined up four forwards (in stark contrast to the usual one or two nowadays), Brasil romped to its first World Cup title behind Pelé's six goals. Team: Gilmar, Djalma Santos, Belini, Orlando and Nilton Santos, Zito and Didi, Garrincha, Vavá, Pelé and Zagallo. Coach: Vicente Feola.

In 1962, Chile was host of the World Cup Tournament. With basically the same crew as in 1958, only without Pelé (who was injured after the second game), Brasil repeated the triumph; this time led by Garrincha's sensational dribbling and ball control.

The third and last World Cup in which Pelé participated took place in Mexico in 1970. As always, it was preparation and great players that helped Brasil to win its third World Cup. Brasil was victorious in six games.

As the first country to win three World Cups, Brasil was granted permanent possession of the Jules Rimet trophy.

In 1994, Brasil won its fourth World Cup at the 15th World Cup Tournament held in the United States. A corps of supremely gifted players, led by forwards Romário and Bebeto (see story below) and midfielder Dunga, rolled to a fourth championship, defeating Italy in penalty kicks in the finals.

Brasil has been in every World Cup — all 16.

Here's a rundown of their performance in each:

- 1930 — First-round elimination
- 1934 — First-round elimination
- 1938 — Third place
- 1950 — Runner-up
- 1954 — Quarterfinal elimination
- 1958 — World Champions
- 1962 — World Champions
- 1966 — First-round elimination
- 1970 — World Champions
- 1974 — World Cup, Fourth place
- 1978 — Third Place (unbeaten)
- 1982 — Second-round elimination
- 1986 — Quarterfinal elimination
- 1990 — Second-round elimination
- 1994 — World Champions
- 1998 — Runner-up

BEBETO'S MILESTONE: 500 GOALS

Brazil's former World Cup-winning striker Bebeto bagged the 500th goal of his career for Botafogo against Corinthians in the Rio-Sao Paulo tournament.

Bebeto, who was a member of the victorious Brazil squad in 1994 and also played in the side that lost the 1998 final against France, scored after 31 minutes of the first half, leveling the match at 1-1. Corinthians went on to win 3-2.

The diminutive striker has also played for Flamengo and Vitoria in his native country as well as Spanish sides Deportivo La Coruna and Seville.

The one blot on his career came when he refused to take a last-minute penalty for Deportivo in 1994 which would have won them the Spanish title.

Former Jamaica captain Hector Wright had his jaw broken after a fracas involving rock-throwing spectators cut short a Montego Bay cup match.

Officials from Wright's club Seba United said the 30-year-old midfielder's jaw was fractured in two places during this week's match against Wadadah.

Seba led 2-1 in the 83rd minute when Wright, who was Jamaica's captain at the start of their 1994 World Cup campaign, was sent off.

Reacting to a strong tackle by a Wadadah defender on a team mate Wright, who gained 110 caps for Jamaica, punched the defender in the face and was shown the red card.

The incident triggered a brawl, which saw spectators sitting in the stands and outside the stadium throwing stones on to the field. Several spectators were injured. It is unclear when Wright suffered his broken jaw.

Real Betis's Paraguayan international midfielder Celso Ayala suddenly found himself a man without many friends on Friday, the day after he lamented his treatment by coach Javier Clemente.

"I don't want to be here and don't know if he wants me here," Ayala said.

"Nobody forced him to come here," club captain Alexis Trujillo retorted.

"I think we should be concentrating on the games ahead because if we don't, we will have more wide-ranging problems," Trujillo added.

"In my opinion if he wants to go, we should let



Paraguay's Ignacio and Aguilera against the Republic of Ireland's Robbie Keane. Paraguay lost 2-0 in this midweek friendly.

him go without any obstacles," Brazilian midfielder Denilson commented.

"If he is not happy here then he should go, because if not he will not only not play well but he'll also affect the rest of the squad and his attitude

will rub off on his colleagues."

Ayala, who enjoyed a good World Cup in France, was signed last August from Argentina's River Plate but has not settled.

He was sentenced to a month's solitary training

by Clemente in January, later commuted to a couple of weeks, after arriving back late from his Christmas break in South America.

Real Betis confirmed on Thursday that Brazilian club Sao Paulo had shown an interest in signing Ayala.

Compiled by

GREECE

Soccer Weekly

A.D. Akratos

OLYMPIAKOS RETURN TO THEIR WINNING WAYS

Olympiakos to get 5,200 tickets for Delle Alpi

After complaining to Juventus that 2,600 tickets just weren't enough, the legendary Italian side conceded the point and upped the ticket allocation to the Greek club to 5,200 for the match.

The game in question is none other than the first leg of the European Cup quarterfinal scheduled for March 3.

The scarcity of tickets and Juventus' miserly attitude regarding tickets has angered club officials for three reasons: (a) Greek fans travel and in numbers; (b) Italy is a hop away to travel to and the game is the biggest in the history of the club; and (c) there are many, many Greeks living in Italy, who have already requested tickets from Olympiakos after being unable to secure tickets from Juventus.

Eeny, meeny, miney, mo!

Slovakian attacker Martin Fambous has added a fourth club to the list of those keeping an eye on him in the hope of signing him. Besides the Greek Champions, Espanol (Spain) and Bochum (Germany), the latest on the trail of the 23-year-old Slovakian attacker is Stuttgart (Germany).

Fambous scored two goals for the a Slovakian National Team in a friendly match with Bochum of the German Bundesliga, catching the eye of Olympiakos coach Dusan Bajevic.

The Reds are reportedly ready to make a 100 million drx. (\$750,000) offer for him. The details of the deal could be worked out in the next 10 days.

I'm Gunna be a Star!

AEK's two new signings seem to be setting themselves for a long stay if their first week is anything to go by. Christopher Wreh, cousin of club stalwart Sebwe, marked his debut with the third goal in AEK's demolition of Panionios last Sunday but one, and Mendez has been waxing lyrical about the sun, beaches and all things Mediterranean at the expense of a mist shrouded, rain pelted and cold England.

AEK lose friendly with Steaua

Giorgos Passios was able to help AEK draw level at 1-1, but Steaua Bucharest proved too much as the foreigners topped AEK, 2-1, in a friendly last Wednesday at the Nikos Goumas Stadium in Nea Philadelphia.

Rozou was the first to score for the visitors, beating AEK's goalkeeper Chrisostomos Michailidis with a penalty kick in the 21st minute.

Passios then tied the game at one goal apiece after Dimitris Markos sent in a corner from the left. Passios was just outside the small box and charged onto the ball sending it barreling into the left side of the net as the Steaua keeper stood and watched.

AEK played mostly its first team in the match though team captain Demis Nikolaidis came on as a substitute in the 46th minute, but newcomers Mendez and Wreh each got plenty of playing time.

Steaua are the defending Romanian Champions and the game represents the second visit for the team in Athens this season as Steaua lost in the Champions League qualifying round to Panathinaikos in August.

AEK: Michailidis (gk); Lakis; Karayiannis (Tsekoli, 57); Kapsis; Markos; Zikos (Passios, 55); Gretsarsson (Katsavos, 46); Sebwe (Kostenoglou, 51); Mendez (Kasapis, 51); Zoumboulis (Nikolaidis, 46); Wreh (Kavazis, 60).

Greek defender ends exile from Sheffield United

Greek international defender Vassilios Borbokis has returned to Sheffield United following his short self-imposed exile in Greece.



Olympiakos

Borbokis, 30 on Wednesday, returned to his homeland at the start of last week saying he had an injury, but he did not have the club's permission to go to Greece.

He was subsequently fined two weeks wages and placed on the transfer list.

Borbokis held talks with United player-manager Steve Bruce on Thursday and insisted afterwards he wanted to stay at Bramall Lane. Bruce, however, was adamant he was staying on the transfer list.

Borbokis, who joined the First Division club from AEK Athens before the start of last season, has developed a reputation as a classy wing-back and scored a number of spectacular goals from free-kicks.

GREEK CUP 1998-1999

Panathinaikos cleans up In the mud

Yiannis Goumas, Igor Sipniewski and Leonidas Vokolos each took a turn scoring a goal on Thursday as Panathinaikos beat Panserraikos, 3-0, at the Serron Stadium in the first leg of the Greek Cup quarterfinals.

The game started with the rain coming down in torrents, but it soon lightened up. Still, the bad weather coupled with the not-so-great condition of the field made things interesting from the start.

Panathinaikos, Cup finalists last year, tried not to let the poor conditions impede their flair as they started to attack right from the start. Things paid off early as in the 16th minute as Andreas Lagonikakis sent a corner whizzing into a crowded penalty box.

Two Panathinaikos players and one Panserraikos player jumped for the header, but the ball really didn't go anywhere from the attempted clearance except to the foot of Goumas, who was standing all alone right in front of the net. He easily beat Panserraikos goalkeeper Karipis for the first goal.

Sipniewski added to the lead in the 28th minute. Nikos Limberopoulos sent a long ball into space for the Polish forward, but Panserraikos defender Meserdis was able to get to it first.

Karipis came off his line to help out, but just as Meserdis was trying to turn to clear the ball, Sipniewski tapped it away and ran into the area. Both Karipis and Meserdis tried to get back, but Sipniewski easily sent the ball into the back of the open net.

Panserraikos refused to die, however and continued to attack throughout the rest of the game, but their second division status was made obvious by the number of times they put themselves in a great position and then failed to capitalise on their chances.

The two best chances for the home team came just before the end of the first half as Kostas Ipirotis won a free kick in the 43rd minute after Limberopoulos

took him down.

Fransen took the kick and centered the ball into Ipirotis, who got a head on the ball but sent it wide.

In the 45th minute Papageorgiou had a great shot but with Vladan Milojevic providing just enough defence, the shot went wide.

Panserraikos opened the second half by continuing to play aggressive football. But when the only goal of the second half was scored, it was Panathinaikos who got it through Vokolos. Theofilaktos Nikolaidis

sent in a cross from a free kick and Vokolos, who was left unguarded, got in a free shot.

He had Karipis beat, but his shot hit the right post and amazingly, the rebound came right back to him (and who was still wide open), and the defender scored with his left foot.

PANSERRAIKOS: Karipis (gk); Papageorgiou (Valvis, 80); Havos; Angos; Meserdis; Kiosses; Pavlik (Moutidis, 54); Fransen; Ipirotis; Shuster (Tsiblidis, 61); Iliopoulos.

PANATHINAIKOS: Nikopolidis (gk); Lagonikakis; Fissas (Nikolaidis, 69); Goumas; Milojevic; Vokolos; Karagounis (Podaras, 69); Konstantinidis; Limberopoulos; Apostolakis; Sipniewski (Da Silva, 88).

Kalamata grab Initiative

Kalamata played Athinaikos to a standstill 0-0 draw on Wednesday in the first leg of a Greek Cup quarterfinal tie at the Virona Stadium.

Athinaikos had the first chance to open the scoring in the 9th minute when Theodoridis sent in a corner kick to a waiting Kambas who took his shot from near the penalty spot, but the ball went a bit wide of Kalamata goalkeeper Kelpekis' post.

Athinaikos had one other good chance in the game, which came in the 90th minute but Spinoulas' header couldn't find the back of the net. Kalamata had its two good chances to steal the victory in the 54th and 74th minutes, but both times the visitors were off the mark.

Both Kalamata and Athinaikos play in the Second Division. Kalamata is currently tied for first place with Kallithea and Ioannina just three points behind.

ATHINAIKOS: Veziridis (gk); Theodoridis (Rafailidis, 85); Basala; Poulos; Michail; Miselic; Karamanos; Kambas (Spinoulas, 70); Karidis; Pouloupoulos; Georgamlis.

KALAMATA: Kelpekis (gk); Drougas; Mikes; Kostoulas; Santoro; Alvertis (Suarez, 89); Tzanetis; Troupkos (Bahramis, 22); Sentemendes; Rotzerio (Koutsoures, 82); Georgas.

Kizeridis heads Aris over Proodeftiki

Nikos Kizeridis scored the only goal of the game nearly in the first half as Aris was able to top Proodeftiki on Wednesday at the Nea Ionia Stadium, 1-0. The game was a make-up from two weeks ago when the teams were snowed out.

Kizeridis was able to notch the only goal of the game in the 6th minute as Giorgos Koutsis crossed in a ball from the right and he dove forward, getting his head on the ball while Proodeftiki defender Routzieris was left floundering. Proodeftiki goalkeeper Vangelis Karasavvas tried to get a hand on the ball, but the ball came in just inside the post, too far for Karasavvas to get a touch.

Most of the first half and much of the second half was controlled by Aris. Proodeftiki got its first good

shot in the 28th minute when Elias Houzouris took a blast from way out that went high and wide.

Just before that, Paolo Andrioli almost made it 2-0 but good defense from Pantos quelled the threat. Andrioli and the Aris supporters were crying for a penalty, but referee Giorgos Psychomanis would have none of it.

Carlos Flores almost added to the scoreline in the 39th minute when he ran in on the left and looked to cross it to the far post.

His shot, however, would have gone in just inside the far post had Proodeftiki's Routzieris not cleared it off the line.

Aris continued to get most of the chances in the game but things changed when Routzieris was red-carded in the 64th minute for a second bookable offense.

After the sending off, however, Proodeftiki picked up the pace and although they still didn't look like the better team they attacked better and kept Aris guessing but couldn't find the final touch to earn themselves a point.

ARIS: Dellios (gk); Georgiadis; Koutsis; Andrioli; Kizeridis; Nagoli (Erak, 70); Koltisidas; Katsiaros; Mantzios (c); Liolidis (Vlahoudis, 86); Flores (Dalkidis, 46).

PROODEFTIKI: Karasavvas (gk); Ambelas; Angelopoulos (c); Pantelidis (Fouskas, 17); Pantos (Andralas, 90); Dagas; Houzouris; Alzaher; Protasof (Politis, 68); Routzieris; Almanidis.

PAOK hires Ari Haan to lead team

After the sudden departure of PAOK coach Angelos Anastasiadis, PAOK have hired Dutchman Ari Haan to take over the helm. Haan was the coach at PAOK three-and-a-half years ago and now returns to the team he still loves while Anastasiadis leaves the team after two disappointing results in the last three weeks.

Bad results are not tolerated by the PAOK faithful, who are said to be the most fanatical in Greece, and bad results at Toumba are punishable by death and in the face of threats Anastasiadis leaves PAOK with a 45-11-9 record.

Haan plans an attacking strategy for his team and will get a baptism of fire right off the bat as PAOK plays at arch rival Aris this weekend.

Haan coached PAOK in 39 league games over 13 months during the 1994-95 and 95-96 seasons for a 22-7-10 record. He coached PAOK for just five games in the second season, going 2-2-1, before leaving for Feyenoord of the Dutch Championship.

Rumours

There have been a lot of rumors circulating around the port in Pireaus about Olympiakos players taking their talents abroad, but so far no one has left the country.

The latest tidbit from the rumor mill is that English giants Manchester United are interested in Olympiakos midfielder Grigorios Georgatos.

Reports say Georgatos, who was apparently scouted by the Red Devils in Cyprus last week when Greece won the mini international tournament trophy by beating Finland and Belgium, could be sold for 5.5 million dollars (1 billion drx).

A liosa Asanovic may be just another Croatian international but in Greece he is treated like royalty as the undoubted jewel in PAO's crown of internationals.

Since his arrival in the summer, questions have been periodically raised about his ability, his commitment and just about every aspect of his personal life.

For the last few months however there has been a growing murmur surrounding his (alleged) schism with coach Daniil, and disillusionment with the Greek game, which reached fever pitch during the week when it was revealed that the player's management team had been approached by a Japanese group interested in taking the player to the J League.

So far there is no word that either the player or the club has responded to their approach but you can bet drachmas to yen that if the moolah is good enough, he will be leaving at the end of the season.

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CLUB V COUNTRY ISSUE HEATS UP

Europe's top soccer clubs will tell FIFA president Sepp Blatter next month they are to demand compensation for releasing national team players, a representative of Bayern Munich said.

Officials of the top 14 clubs in Europe, known as G14, met in Madrid on Tuesday and, according to Bayern Munich vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, agreed unanimously that they should get some compensation when they release players for national team duty.

Rummenigge, who attended the meeting, said the G14 representatives will discuss the issue when they meet Blatter in Zurich on March 27.

While the clubs aren't against Blatter's idea to stage the World Cup every two years, Rummenigge said they also want a better coordinated international calendar.

"Reforms have to be made, the calendar has to be coordinated worldwide," he said.

"You can't have European championships in July, Asian championships in November, Africans in January and South America in September."

Many German clubs are obliged to release their foreign players for up to a month for continental championships.

"It can't go on that the clubs are the only ones to bear the costs. Our status is unsatisfactory," Rummenigge said.

Another German representative, Borussia Dortmund manager Michael Meier, supported Rummenigge's argument.

"If Mr. Blatter wants a World Cup every two years, that's OK. But he should then also take care of compensating the clubs, they are the ones who are paying the clubs," Meier said.

Rummenigge said the best way would be for national federations to take over the players' salary for the time when they are on national team duty.

The German federation now pays Bundesliga clubs 6,000 marks (US\$3,500/3,000 euros) for each player called up to the national team. The clubs have been demanding much higher fees.

Rummenigge said it was clear that many national federations would not be able to afford salaries earned by their stars in rich West European clubs.

"We have to find an international consensus that would take into consideration specific conditions in different countries," Rummenigge said.

The G14 are Real Madrid, Barcelona, Juventus Turin, AC Milan, Internazionale Milan, Manchester United, Liverpool, Paris St. Germain, Olympique Marseille, Ajax Amsterdam, PSV Eindhoven, FC Porto, Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich.

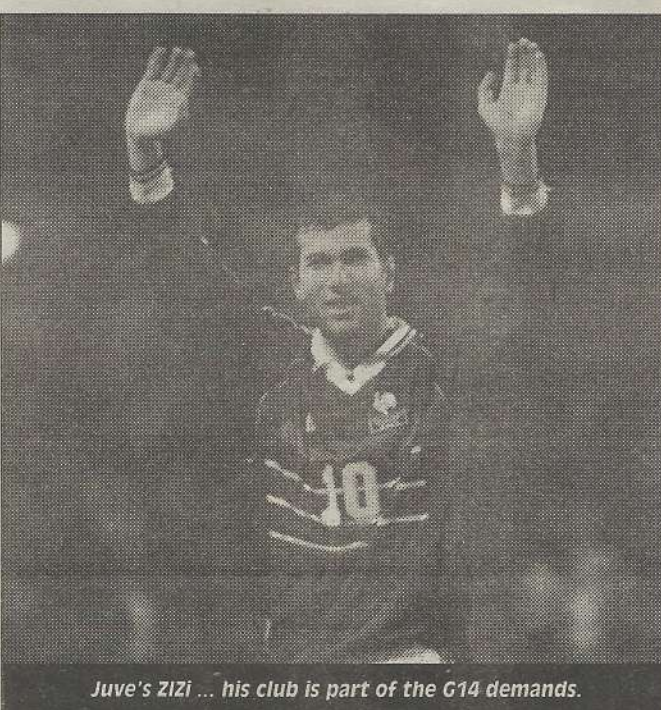
The newly formed Association of European Premier Leagues proposed a Europe-wide transfer window.

They also suggested a common European calendar for international fixtures to avoid clashes with league matches and said there should be a minimum number of players under the age of 21 in each team's squad.

The 13-strong group met at the offices of the English premier league, with British Sports Minister Tony Banks also in attendance.

The three main ideas were put forward for further discussion at the association's next meeting, to be held in March.

The common transfer window policy is the most radical proposal as currently there are widely different arrangements, some leagues having cut-off deadlines and others having transfer windows at various times during the season.



Juve's ZIZI ... his club is part of the G14 demands.

English premier league Chief Executive Peter Lever said: "We think it might be feasible for the leagues to come together on this point."

"There is feeling we need harmony throughout Europe to ensure fair play and it's something we will continue to discuss."

The concept of promoting home-grown youth players follows the Scottish F.A.'s rule that says at least two Scottish-born players under 21-years-of-age must be included in each first team squad.

The move to harmonize international dates is to try to limit the number of players missing club games to play in friendlies.

The Association represents the leagues of Austria,

Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Switzerland, is officially recognized by UEFA.

Nike has parted ways with the Italian soccer federation (FIGC), the company announced.

In a meeting with financial analysts, Nike officials informed the FIGC Tuesday that it will no longer sponsor the Italian national teams, a deal that was costing Nike \$15 million a year.

While losing the sponsorship of a powerhouse team such as Italy would have been unthinkable for Nike in past years, the announcement drew praise from Wall Street analysts, who say the move is evidence Nike is serious about cutting costs.

Tom Clarke, Nike president and chief operating officer, told analysts that the Beaverton company will return to sales growth in its 2000 fiscal year, which begins June 1.

"We're poised to have steady improvement," Clarke said. He did warn, however, that the turnaround will be slow and steady. "I think we have to be clear: We're not going to explode into revenue growth."

Ongoing fiscal discipline is key, executives said. Forgoing a continuing relationship with the Italian federation, seen as a jewel of the company's soccer sports marketing program, is proof of that, said Ian Todd, Nike's vice president for sports marketing.

"This is definitely a new Nike," analyst Dana Cohen said.

Nike has cut its selling, general and administrative costs from \$2.8 billion in its 1998 fiscal year to \$2.4 billion in 1999.

The cuts included eliminating staff and moving headquarters of Nike's Asia-Pacific main office from Hong Kong to Beaverton for a savings of \$150 million. The company could trim another \$50 million through a new procurement system that reduces the number of Nike's suppliers.

Nike has also cut back on filling new positions and taken to paying lower fees for athlete endorsements.

GERMANY'S US TOUR STILL A STRUGGLE

Germany and Colombia played a 3-3 draw in a friendly match on Tuesday afternoon.

Germany's Michael Preetz and Colombia's Faustino Asprilla each scored two goals and had one assist in a wide open match before 14,565 at the Orange Bowl.

Down 3-2 with 10 minutes remaining, Colombia tied the match on Ivan Cordoba's goal off a free kick from Asprilla.

Playing with a man advantage for the final 45 minutes after Colombia's Alexander Lemus was ejected with one minute remaining in the first half, Germany twice took one-goal leads, but Colombia overcame both deficits.

Germany, trying to rebound from a 3-0 loss to the United States Saturday in Jacksonville, appeared to have secured the match when Marco Bode's header on a centering pass from Preetz gave the Germans a 3-2 lead at the 74th minute.

Germany had an earlier one-goal lead on Preetz's header that beat Colombian goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba at the 55th minute.

But seven minutes later, Colombia tied the match, when Asprilla converted on a penalty kick.

Referee Brian Hall whistled substitute German goalkeeper Jens Lehman for fouling Colombia's Jorge Bermudez inside the penalty area.

Colombia took a 1-0 lead in the 26th minute when four players combined on Asprilla's goal.

Arley Betancourt fed a charging Neider Morantes inside the German goal area after a crossing pass from Henry Zambrano. Just as Morantes attracted multiple coverage deep in the left wing, he centered a pass to a wide open Asprilla, who easily beat goalkeeper Oliver Kahn.

Zambrano almost gave Colombia a second goal in the 31st minute when his right foot blast from 18 yards was deflected by Kahn.

Just as Colombia seemed to dominate the action, Germany tied the match on Preetz's goal at the 33rd minute.

The goal was set when Oliver Neuville took a long pass from Lothar Matthaus and blasted a shot deflected by goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba. Preetz took the deflection and drilled a shot in the lower right corner past goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba.

Earlier in the match, Preetz had a goal disallowed when he was whistled offside at the 14th minute.

Colombia: Oscar Cordoba (goalkeeper); Ivan Cordoba; Foad Maziri; Jorge Bermudez (captain); Alexander Lemus; Mauricio Serna; Arely Betancourt (Lelder Preciado, 46:00); Neider Morantes (Jorge Salcedo, 80:00); Jorge Bolanos (Mario Yepes, 46:00); Faustino Asprilla; Henry Zambrano (Edwin Congo, 60:00).

Germany: Oliver Kahn (goalkeeper) (Jens Lehman, 46:00); Lothar Matthaus (captain); Markus Babel; Christian Worns; Marko Rehmer; Andreas Moller; Oliver Neuville (Alexander Zickler, 74:00); Jens Jeremies (Christian Nerlinger, 46:00); Marco Bode; Marco Reich (Lars Ricken, 78:00); Michael Preetz.

German veteran and former national team captain Lothar Matthaus could be heading to New York/New Jersey MetroStars when his contract with Bayern Munich expires next year, a German newspaper said.

The mass-circulation Bild said Matthaus had been offered a contract by the MetroStars coach, Bora Milutinovic.



German fans in the US.

"I've always dreamed of New York," Bild quoted Matthaus as saying. "I can well imagine a transfer once my contract with Bayern expires in 2000."

"If I haven't had enough by then, perhaps I'll play some more in the United States," he was quoted as saying.

Matthaus, 37, was with Germany's national team in Florida, where the Germans lost 3-0 to the United States and drew 3-3 with Colombia.

The 37-year-old libero has been heavily criticized for his poor performances in both games.

A veteran of a record 132 games for Germany, Matthaus led the nation to the 1990 World Cup triumph in Italy. He was recalled to the national team last year before the World Cup in France after injuries ruled out several other players.

New coach Erich Ribbeck has called Matthaus a key element in his attempt to steer Germany successfully through the ongoing European Championship qualifications.

But Matthaus' failure to hold together Germany's leaky defence during the Florida trip raised questions in the German press whether time had finally caught up with the long-serving star.

However, Milutinovic was quoted by Bild as saying that he would take Matthaus immediately.

Bild has been one of the strongest Matthaus backers and led last year's media campaign to have him recalled to the national team.

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FIorentina FEEL THE ABSENCE OF BATISTUTA

Florentina striker Gabriel Batistuta's injury absence had an immediate impact Sunday, with new Serie A leader Lazio the biggest beneficiary.

Roberto Carlos Sosa's goal with 10 minutes left gave Udinese a 1-0 upset against a toothless Fiorentina, dropping the losers behind Lazio, which moved up even though its nine-game winning streak ended in a 0-0 draw at Cagliari.

Sosa, an Argentine striker, closed a swift exchange with Tomas Locatelli and fired the return pass under the crossbar to hand Fiorentina its first loss in five games.

Fiorentina clearly missed its top two strikers, Argentina's Batistuta out at least a month with a left leg injury) and Brazil's Edmundo (who left the team to go to Brazil for Carnival). Batistuta leads Serie A with 18 goals.

Lazio, meanwhile, saw its league-leading attack completely shut down at Cagliari. The Roman club was trying to equal the Serie A record of 10 consecutive wins, first set by Juventus in the 1931-32 season and matched twice since.

But the draw was enough to pull Lazio even with Fiorentina on points (42), and ahead of its rival on goal difference.

It's the first time Lazio has been atop the standings since early in the 1974-75 campaign, a year after the team claimed its lone championship.

AC Milan stayed on the top pair's heels, with 40 points, by edging out a gutsy Venezia 2-1.

Elsewhere, Inter Milan continued its roller-coaster season, losing 2-1 at Perugia without Brazil's Ronaldo or veteran Roberto Baggio, both injured.

It was veteran Yugoslav coach Vujadin Boskov's first game with Perugia, which hired him after Ilario Castagner resigned.

Carlo Ancelotti's debut as coach of Juventus was also successful, as the two-time defending league champions beat the reds of Piacenza 2-0. Marcello Lippi abruptly quit as Juve's coach minutes after the previous weekend's 4-2 loss to AC Parma.

AS Roma, which signed its own embattled coach, Zdenek Zeman, to a one-year contract extension during the week, beat Sampdoria of Genoa 3-1 thanks to two goals in the final six minutes by substitute forward Paulo Sergio, a Brazilian.

Inter is fifth with 34 points, followed by Udinese (33), Roma (31), and Juventus (30).

MATCH HIGHLIGHTS

Udinese1 Fiorentina0

At Udine, Sosa scored his fourth goal in four games as Udinese increased ran its unbeaten streak to seven games.



Vieri and Baggio training with the Azzurri midweek. Vieri could be in Australia in June.

Fiorentina, which had midfielder Sandro Cois sent off with three minutes remaining, needs to find some spark in attack if it's going to weather Batistuta's absence and take home its first title in 30 years.

Udinese dominated the action throughout, with Sosa and fellow striker Marcio Amoroso of Brazil repeatedly forcing goalkeeper Francesco Toldo — who had recorded three straight blank sheets, into classy stops.

Fiorentina: Toldo; Padalino; Repka, Falcone, Heinrich; Torricelli, Cois, Rui Costa, C.Amoroso (Ficini dal 34' s.t.); Oliveira (Robbiati dal 25' s.t.), Esposito. (Mareggini, Firicano, Tarozzi, Bigica, Amor).

Cagliari0 Lazio0

At Cagliari, the Sardinians silenced a Lazio attack that had scored at least three goals in each of its past four games.

Milan2 Venezia1

In Milan, where Venezia's only win came in 1942, the hosts took the lead through goals by Argentine winger Andres Guglielminpietro from 5

yards out off a corner kick in the 39th minute and Maurizio Ganz from a header from seven yards in the 53rd.

Venezia cut the deficit on substitute Brazilian striker Tuta's header in the 70th, but faltered after defender Bilica, another Brazilian, was sent off with 10 minutes to go.

Perugia2 Inter1

In Perugia, Ecuadorian striker Ivan Kaviedes scored 18 minutes into the game for the hosts who then continued to have the upper hand despite the expulsion of midfielder Renato Olive in the 56th minute.

Perugia was rewarded in the 80th, when Croat striker Milan Rapajic tallied his eighth goal.

Inter scored a meaningless goal seconds before the final whistle courtesy of French striker Youri Djorkaeff's penalty kick, his fifth.

Juventus2 Piacenza0

In Piacenza, where Juventus has never lost in 10 trips, both goals came in injury time.

Juve went up 1-0 at the end of the first half, when Yugoslav defender Zoran Mirkovic's shot

from the edge of the penalty area deflected into the net off Piacenza's Gian Paolo Manighetti.

Alessandro Birindelli's goal in the fifth minute of second-half injury time sealed the result, keeping Piacenza winless in 1999.

Roma3 Sampdoria1

In Rome, Paulo Sergio entered the game with 15 minutes left and was the difference for Roma finding the target in the 84th and 89th minutes.

The game's other goals came early, with newly acquired Brazilian striker Fabio Junior scoring his first Serie A goal for Roma in the 10th minute, and France's Salio Lassissi responding for Samp in the 15th.

Salernitana3 Empoli2

At Empoli Di Vaio scored in the 33rd, 68th and 82nd minutes, doubling his goal total for the season, as Salernitana picked up a key win in its battle to avoid relegation.

Raffaele Cerbone hit a header in the 31st and Claudio Bonomi slotted in a penalty kick in second-half injury time for Vince Grella's Empoli.

Bari0 Vicenza0

In Bari, Vicenza salvaged the draw despite playing the last 50 minutes with 10 men due defender Marco being sent off.

Parma1 Bologna1

This was the late game on Sunday. Stanic scored for Parma late in injury time to cancel out the earlier Bologna goal scored by Kolyvanov in the 23rd minute.

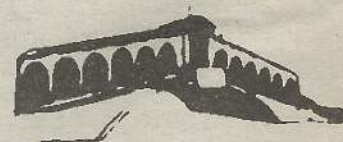
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INTER V LAZIO
PARMA V SALERNITANA
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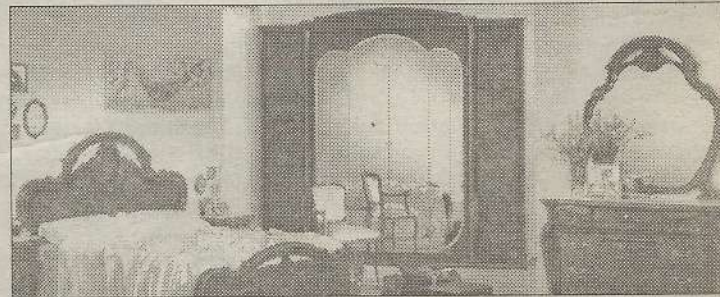


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KING OF SUPERSTITIONS RETIRES

Madrid authorities have begun proceedings against Atletico Madrid for failing to prevent its fans displaying Nazi symbols during a recent match, a spokeswoman said.

Regional laws prohibit banners that incite violence, racism or xenophobia from being unfurled at public events, and Atletico could face a fine of between 5 million pesetas and 50 million pesetas (\$36,000-\$360,000, euros 30,000-300,000).

A spokeswoman for the Madrid regional government said this was the first time it had taken action to strictly enforce the ban on Nazi symbols at soccer games.

"The important thing is not the size of the fine but rather that soccer clubs feel they are being watched," said the spokeswoman, who declined to be identified.

Inspectors at the match between Atletico and Real Sociedad played at the Madrid club's Vicente Calderon Stadium spotted Nazi symbols, including swastikas, on flags held by Atletico fans.

The last time Sociedad and Atletico played each other on Dec. 9, a Sociedad fan was fatally stabbed allegedly by neo-fascist Atletico fans outside the team stadium.

Ilie Dumitrescu, whose two goals sank Argentina in the 1994 World Cup finals, said on Saturday he wanted to retire while his fans still remembered him at his best.

"The Dumitrescu of today gave way in favour of the Dumitrescu of yesterday. You have to know when to quit. I want people to remember my best matches," Dumitrescu told a news conference.

He said he was refusing a large fee due to be paid by his club Steaua Bucharest next month "because it would have been unfair to take the money if I wasn't at my peak."

Dumitrescu surprised Romanians earlier in the week by announcing his retirement from the game just one month after turning 30.

Following the retirement of Gheorghe Hagi at the age of 34 last year, Dumitrescu's departure signals the end of a golden era in Romanian football which saw the country reach the last three World Cup finals.

One of four team leaders alongside Hagi, Gica Popescu and Ionut Lupescu, his several superstitions made him an institution in the national side.

Dumitrescu was always last to take to the field and he sat, without fail, in the last row of the team bus.

The team driver had to follow various rituals which Dumitrescu said were essential for team victories. He

would not tolerate sitting in a bus travelling in reverse and he insisted that whistling be banned on board.

Dumitrescu once told Reuters his three favourite things were roses, good perfume and computers.

A fervent Orthodox Christian, Dumitrescu went to church before difficult matches and he adhered to the tradition of placing basil flowers in his shoes.

"The reason I did not perform very well at Tottenham and West Ham is probably that there aren't many Orthodox churches in England," he joked a few years ago after struggling to find his feet in British club football.

His career also took him to Spanish side Sevilla and Mexican clubs America and Atlante.

"His retirement is premature, but I understand him," former Romanian national coach Anghel Iordanescu said by telephone from Greece, where he now looks after the national team for the Europe 2000 campaign. "Like Hagi, it was a matter of pride."

Dumitrescu said he now planned a career in sports management. "I want to get into (being) a players' agent."

Ronaldo, long troubled by knee tendinitis, may be back to action this week after French doctors declared him fit to play, Inter Milan officials said.

The 22-year-old Brazilian striker would be fielded for a portion of Wednesday's Italian Cup first-leg semifinal against Parma.

Inter's coach Mircea Lucescu said he hoped to have the star-forward in his best form for the March 3 Champions League quarterfinal match against Manchester United.

Ronaldo, who has been suffering from inflamed tendons in both knees since the 1998 World Cup in France, has been repeatedly sidelined this season and has played his last Serie A match with Inter on Jan. 17.

However Italy's largest sports daily Gazzetta dello Sport reported Saturday that Ronaldo was cautious



Del Piero ... one of the many injured players in Italy.

about his comeback as he still feels some pain in his left knee.

Ronaldo said in a recent interview that he made a mistake by trying to return to action too soon last year, aggravating his knee problems.

The club said that Ronaldo underwent successful knee examinations by a team of French professors in Paris three days ago.

The Milan club, badly missing Ronaldo's goals although fielding such stars as Roberto Baggio, Ivan Zamorano and Diego Simeone, is currently fifth in the Serie A standings, eight points behind leader Fiorentina.

Ronaldo was a key to Inter's triumph in the UEFA Cup and to second place in the Italian league last season.

This season Ronaldo has played only 8 full matches of Inter's 34 league and Cup games, scoring 7 goals — three on penalties.

Some of the most talented soccer stars in Italy's Serie A, who receive a total of 250 billion lire (\$152 million, 129 million euros), are currently sidelined with injuries.

Alen Boksic, the veteran Croat forward of Lazio of Rome, has not played a single match this season due to a knee problem and will be unable to help his team Sunday, when it plays Cagliari to shoot for a record-

tying 10th consecutive win in league matches.

Lazio, which is trailing Fiorentina by a single point in the Serie A standings, luckily could rely on Italian striker Christian Vieri, who returned to action last month scoring five goals in six matches. Vieri had been sidelined by a knee injury for several weeks.

"No doubt that injuries of key players can cost the teams a lot," said Sven-Goran Eriksson, Lazio's Swedish coach. "Not by chance we began a winning streak since Vieri and (key defender Alessandro) Nesta returned from injury."

Several commentators suggested that busy schedules, alternating leagues, friendly and international matches every week, are causing the injuries that have affected other leading clubs such as Juventus, Inter, AC Milan and Fiorentina.

However, some club officials contend that bad luck is causing the injuries that have kept team doctors and physiotherapists busy this season.

"There is a negative period [due to injuries] in the career of every great soccer player," said Inter's president Massimo Moratti.

In fact, the extended absence of the most expensive Serie A star-forwards, Alessandro Del Piero and Ronaldo, has been blamed for the disappointing results of their clubs.

Without del Piero since November, and now without young striker Filippo Inzaghi, defending league champion Juventus of Turin has slipped to ninth place overall, out of contention for the title.

Inter, which had started the season as a title favorite, is fifth since Ronaldo could play only eight full matches out of 34 this season because of tendinitis in both knees.

Inter is also missing Chilean veteran striker Ivan Zamorano, sidelined since mid-January with a bad thigh strain.

Del Piero, who tore knee ligaments during a league match and is expected to be out through the end of the season in May, brings in 60 billion lire (\$36 million, 30.9 million euros) in salary and other contracts. Ronaldo is also expected to be out the entire season.

League leader Fiorentina has seen its title chances and its prestige dimmed since Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta suffered a knee injury.

Batistuta, whose worth of 40 billion lire 20.6 million euros) may have risen this season from his 18 goals in 20 league games, is expected to be sidelined for four weeks. Also out is AC Milan's Liberian star George Weah, who is nursing a strained leg.

BLATTER'S SCHEDULE OUTLINE FOR TWO YEAR

FIFA president Sepp Blatter's plans to stage the World Cup every two years would eliminate the summer break in European leagues, a newspaper said.

The mass-circulation Bild newspaper said the league seasons around the world would last from February to December.

Bild said its report was based on "top FIFA sources," but it did not identify them.

In the World Cup years, the leagues would break off for a month and resume immediately after the World Cup, Bild said.

A schedule for national team games also would be coordinated, the newspaper said.

World Cup qualifications would have a new, two-stage format. Top-ranked soccer nations would only start playing in the second round, in small three-team groups and would have only four qualifying games, Bild said.

FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren said FIFA's goal was to come up with a coordinated worldwide schedule.

But he said doing away with the summer break "was not a topic of discussion at the moment."

He said FIFA's executive board would discuss the calendar question at its meeting in March.

Would this benefit Australia? Write in and let us know what you think.

FIFA has cleared the English Football Association of acting improperly over the scandal that led to the resignations of chairman Keith Wiseman and chief executive Graham Kelly.

FIFA launched an inquiry after Wieman and Kelly handed the Welsh Football Association a 3.2 million pound grant. The grant was handed over without the knowledge of the rest of the FA executive and was interpreted by the media as a bid to gain the Welsh vote for Wiseman in a FIFA election.

Officials of FIFA spoke to representatives from both the FA and the Welsh FA at the end of January and announced that the matter was now considered closed.

WORLD CUPS

"The two associations involved were asked to submit a report to FIFA on what happened," a FIFA spokesman said. FIFA have found that there were no incorrect or improper actions that would warrant further investigation.

"The case is now closed as far as FIFA is concerned."

FIFA announcement comes as a rare piece of good news for English soccer which is in turmoil after the firing of coach Glenn Hoddle and the emergence of a betting scandal in which floodlights have been sabotaged to halt Premier League games.

The betting scam emerged on Friday when three members working for a suspected Asian gambling syndicate were charged with sabotaging floodlights at Charlton Athletic's stadium.

Police have been investigating three soccer games which were halted by floodlight failures. In Malaysia, huge amounts of money are bet on the results of English games even if they don't finish and the theory is that the blackouts were caused deliberately.

Real Madrid will become the third club in Europe with its own television channel when Real Madrid television (RMT) begins broadcasting this week.

The subscription-based digital channel, which will concentrate on the soccer and basketball sections of the club, will broadcast for 12 hours a day.

A staff of 50 will work on the station, which will have a permanent studio at the club's training complex in the north of Madrid.

England's Manchester United and Olympique Marseille of France are the other clubs who have dedicated TV channels.

Could be time for the Northern Spirit TV, don't you think?



Sepp Blatter ... World Cup qualification would have a new, two-stage format.

Compiled by

EUROPE

Soccer Weekly

Genk consolidates lead

Genk opened a four-point lead at the top of the Belgian first division with a hard-fought 2-1 win at Eendracht Aalst.

Gunter Thiebaert put Aalst in front after 15 minutes but Genk's Croatian striker Branko Strupar equalised in the 22nd minute.

Four minutes later, Strupar, voted best player in the Belgian league in 1998, struck again to put Genk ahead. They held on for the win despite some nervous moments in the second half when Aalst missed several good chances.

Ghent moved up to fourth place in the table thanks to a hat trick by midfielder Ronald Fogueune in their 3-1 win over Kortrijk.

First division clubs will probably only enter the German Cup in the third round as from next season, a German Soccer Federation (DFB) official said on Sunday.

DFB spokesman Wolfgang Niersbach said the federation's council would rule on the proposal at its next meeting on April 17.

"There has been a lot of criticism saying that the professional clubs did not take the competition seriously enough," he said.

It is proposed that the 18 second division clubs and 38 amateur clubs would battle it out in the first two rounds. The 14 remaining clubs would then earn the right to challenge one of the 18 Bundesliga sides for the round of 32.

Luxembourg First Division

Spora Luxembourg	.0	Wiltz	.....2
Mondercange	.....1	Grevenmacher	.....1
Dudelange	.....1	Avenir Beggen	.....0
Union Luxembourg	.4	Petange	.....0

Hobscheid vs. Aris Bonnevoie postponed
Sporting Mertzig vs. Jeunesse Esch postponed

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Union Luxembourg	12	8	4	0	31	4	28
Dudelange	12	8	3	1	21	7	27
Avenir Beggen	13	8	2	3	32	6	26
Jeunesse Esch	12	8	1	3	33	8	25

Sporting Mertzig	12	7	2	3	30	17	23
Grevenmacher	13	7	1	5	26	17	22
Mondercange	13	6	2	5	15	22	20
Aris Bonnevoie	12	4	1	7	17	29	13
Wiltz	11	3	1	7	12	30	10
Spora Luxembourg	13	2	1	10	11	38	7
Hobscheid	12	2	0	10	22	36	6
Petange	13	1	2	10	6	42	5

Portuguese First Division

Beira Mar	.....1	Chaves	.....1
Simic Sasa 9		Jose Wanderley 56	

Rio Ave .....1	Academica .....1
Andre Jacare 27pen	Luis Filipe 23
HT: 1-1 Att: 3,000	
Maritimo .....1	Benfica .....0
Tulipa Cruz 46	
HT: 0-0 Att: 10,000	

Alverca	0	Braga	0
Att: 2,000			
Red card: Artur Jorge (Braga) 68			
Uniao Leiria	3	Compomaiorense	1
Artur Vicente 3,		Laelson Cabral 17	
Reinaldo Silva 69, 79			
HT: 1-1 Att: 2,000			

Alverca	.....0	Braga	.....0
Att: 2,000			
Red card: Artur Jorge (Braga) 68			
Uniao Leiria	.....3	Compomaiorenses	.....1
Artur Vicente 3,		Laelson Cabral 17	
Reinaldo Silva 69, 79			
HT: 1-1 Att: 2,000			

Boavista .....2	Salgueiros .....1
Rogério Melo 33,	Filipe Candido
Awew Kwame 53	
HT: 1-0 Att: 5,000	

top in France

Bordeaux on top in France

France's top scorer Sylvain Wiltord scored twice to give Bordeaux a precious 2-0 win against Bastia and send it back above Marseille to the top of the French first division.

Wiltord, called up to the French squad for the first time last week, struck in the 54th and 72nd minutes, after Bordeaux had struggled to break down the away rearguard in bitterly cold conditions.

The 24-year-old has now scored seven league goals this season.

Lyon and Monaco both want to improve their chances of finishing to claim a place in next season's European champions league.

Lyon consolidated its place in third with a 2-1 win over Nantes, which was fourth before the start of play.

Lyon captain Alain Caveglia opened the scoring with a 37th minute penalty after strike partner Joseph Job had been tripped in the penalty area.

Just after half time Caveglia scored again after a Nantes defender had slipped on the icy pitch.

Nantes substitute Patrick Suffo pulled one back in the 75th minute, but the canaries couldn't force an equalizer.

Monaco continued its good run under new coach Claude Puel, two goals from Victor Ikpeba guiding it to a 4-2 win over Rennes, another challenger for third place.

The Nigerian struck first in the fourth minute, but Rennes hit back with goals from Cedric Bardon and Christophe Leroux.

Monaco then staged a brilliant comeback.

Samba N'Diaye equalized at the end of an action-packed opening 20 minutes, and in the sec-

ond half, Ikpeba fired a penalty and Ludovic Guily added a fourth near the end.

In a match between this season's two under-achievers, champion Lens beat Paris Saint-Germain, winner of both domestic cups last season, 2-1.

Ex-PSG defender Nicolas Laspalles scored a late winner after PSG's Italian star Marco Simone — on as substitute after more than a month out of action — had equalized Stephane Dalmat's early goal.

In the night's other game, Lorient won 1-1 with Montpellier.

Bad weather forced the postponement of two games: Sochaux vs. Le Mans and Strasbourg vs. Auxerre.

The meeting between Nancy and Metz was also called off.

French coach Aime Jacquet got the nod on Sunday to direct the FIFA All-Stars against the Socceroos at the official opening of Sydney's Olympic Stadium.

Jacquet, who coached France to victory last year's World Cup final against Brazil, is expected to announce his first squad by the end of this month and the final squad in April for the match on June 12.

Soccer Australia chairman Basil Scarsella said the appointment indicated the seriousness of FIFA regarding the match.

"At least 28 other sports have put up their hand to be involved in the official opening of the stadium and we're delighted to have this honour," Scarsella said.

See story on page two.

SACCHI IN TROUBLE, BARCA HAMMER REAL

Dario Silva scored with six minutes left to play and led Espanyol to a 2-1 victory Saturday over Atletico de Madrid in Spanish soccer.

It was the fourth straight loss for Atletico and prompted some of the 20,000 fans braving bitter cold weather at Vicente Calderon stadium to scream for the resignation of coach Arrigo Sacchi.

Atletico got on the board first as Jose Maria Romero fought off two defenders to score in the 21st minute. But Espanyol tied the game in the 38th minute through a header by Moises Arteaga and won the game in the final minutes with a header by Silva.

In other action on Saturday, Leonardo Biagini of Argentina converted a penalty in the 64th minute to lead Mallorca to a 1-0 victory over Real Sociedad.

And Jose Oscar Flores scored in the 50th minute to lead Deportivo la Coruna hosts to a 1-0 win over Salamanca.

Luis Enrique Martinez scored twice in the first half, and Rivaldo added a late goal as FC Barcelona rolled to a 3-0 win over a 10-man Real Madrid in a lopsided matchup between the arch-rivals.

Barcelona's ninth straight win in league and cup play gave it breathing room atop the Spanish first division with 43 points, ahead of Mallorca with 38 and Celta with 37 after 22 weeks of play.

Real Madrid dropped to fifth place and Valencia, which lost 1-0 to Villarreal, rose to fourth. Both have 37 points.

For all the hoopla leading up to this rematch — the teams tied 2-2 in October in Madrid — the game turned out to be a bit of a dud.

Barcelona dominated throughout, grabbing a 2-0 lead after just 36 minutes thanks to headers by Luis Enrique. Rivaldo added a third goal in the 81st on a left-footed kick as he was falling down with Ivan Campo hanging all over him.

Real Madrid played most of the game with 10 men after Roberto Carlos drew a red card in the 20th minute for a rough tackle against Luis Figo. Madrid had numerous chances to get on the board in the second half and even tie the game at two goals apiece but failed.

In the first half, Barcelona wasted little time in getting on the board, with Luis Enrique scoring on a header in the fifth minute from a pass by Patrick Kluivert.

Real Madrid didn't manage to get a serious shot on goal until the 31st minute. Peja Mijatovic trying a slow angled shot from near the right sideline.

Kluivert blew a prime chance to score in the 34th minute as he recovered a loose ball right in front of goalie Pedro Contreras but shot wide to the left.

Luis Enrique scored again in the 36th minute, again on a header, this time after a nice pass from captain Josep Guardiola.

Barcelona's goalkeeper Ruud Hesp showed great form all day, making four saves. The first came in the 38th minute as he fell backward and reached up to stop what looked like a sure goal by Raul Gonzalez.

Real Madrid came out stronger in the second half but squandered several chances to score. The best was one in which Raul practically missed the ball as he tried to kick it in just a few feet from Hesp.

In other games on Sunday, Zaragoza drew with Alaves 1-1; Betis tied Racing 1-1; Athletic de Bilbao played to a scoreless draw with Extremadura, and Valladolid beat Celta 2-1. Tenerife lost 2-0 to Oviedo and Villarreal scored in the 88th minute to beat Valencia.

It's always the biggest match of the season. And this year's "national derby" between Barcelona and Real Madrid has generated even more interest due to the political debate over television rights to soccer matches.

But getting just as much attention is that despite the high interest, only a small percentage of the 12 million that would have been expected to watch will



Barca's Rivaldo... scored in the big one against Real.

be able to see the game on television — those that receive the satellite channel Canal Satellite.

It is not the first match to be televised exclusively on pay TV, just the biggest. They don't get any bigger than Barca-Real.

But the high profile of the match has heightened the debate over television coverage of matches that started two years and became a political issue.

At a press conference, Spanish premier Jose Maria Aznar added his voice to the chorus for the match to be broadcast on state-owned television for all to see free of charge.

That seems very unlikely, leaving the Atletico-Espanyol match last Saturday as the nationally televised game.

Meanwhile, Real has been mired in a slump that saw the defending European champion struggle to overcome lowly Valladolid 3-2 last week.

Players' appeals for more support from the terraces prompted fans to jeer them off the pitch, and the club's smarting players have refused to talk to reporters.

But asked about Madrid's troubles, Barcelona's Dutch coach Louis Van Gaal was cautious.

"We were also going through bad times seven weeks ago, and then we notched up seven consecutive wins," he told the sports daily AS which dedicated its first 13 pages to the match.

Barcelona midfielder Oscar Garcia added "Madrid is particularly dangerous now because they need a good result for their peace of mind."

But while Madrid players were silent, Van Gaal's countryman and Real coach Guus Hiddink was vocal in his confidence.

"We are going to win at the Camp Nou, and we are going to do it in style," Hiddink said prior to the game. So much for prophecies!

Teams: Barcelona: 13-Ruud Hesp; 5-Abelardo Fernandez, 25-Frank de Boer, 12-Sergi Barjuan; 18-Ronald de Boer, 4-Josep Guardiola, 15-Philip Cocu; 21-Luis Enrique Martinez; 7-Luis Figo, 19-Patrick Kluivert, 11-Rivaldo

Real Madrid: 13-Pedro Contreras; 2-Christian Panucci, 12-Ivan Campo, 4-Fernando Hierro, 3-Roberto Carlos; 10-Clarence Seedorf, 5-Manuel Sanchis, 17-Robert Jarni; 7-Raul Gonzalez; 8-Predrag Mijatovic, 15-Fernando Morientes
Referee: Eduardo Iturralde Gonzalez

Compiled by

UK

Soccer Weekly

BOSNIAN PUTS PAMPERED PREMIER IN PERSPECTIVE

For all those players in the Premier League who complain about their lives as highly-paid soccer stars, this story should be a must read.

For Muhammed Konjic, fighting doesn't mean a bar-room set-to with a celebrity girlfriend in Paris and stress is not coping with working out how to spend £20,000 a week.

The smile that continually plays around the 28-year-old Bosnian's face is there simply because he is still alive. After surviving the brutal war that destroyed his homeland, a descent into alcoholism and a near-fatal car crash, football in the Premiership is the promised land.

This week, Konjic will be reunited with his wife Haruli and their seven-week-old son as they fly in from the rubble of Sarajevo to start their new life together. But the real miracle for the £2million signing from Monaco is that he is able to breathe, let alone kick a ball for a living, something he could not believe as he cowered amid the ruins of his home village of Brijeswica Velika.

'I was in Bosnia in the war for one-and-a-half years. I know what happened there, I saw it with my own eyes,' recalled the strapping 6ft 3in defender, his mind returning to the darkest days of his life.

'So I don't want to make political statements. I am a footballer. When I was in Bosnia I did whatever I needed to take care of myself and my family. Whatever I had to do, I did it. I didn't have a choice. But the Serbian and Croatian armies invaded my country and attacked my village. When that happens, you only have two choices — to fight or to die.'

There is no guilt, no pretence. Konjic, now captain of the Bosnian team, added: 'It was not just me. It affected all two million of us in Bosnia. In six months, 300,000 of my countrymen and women died. We lost 500,000 in four years.'

'People from outside, the people who don't know, look at what happened in my country and say we must all be to blame for it. But I was there. I know it was not my fault. I only did what I had to do.'

'In western Europe they know that everybody carried guns, fired them and killed people. That was war and I had my gun. But for the first two years we couldn't fight back.'

'I have many friends who are Serbs, many friends who are Croats and there are good people in both countries. But their armies came into my country and tried to kill my people, my family. All I could do was stay alive, keep my family alive.'

'We had no food, no water, no medical equipment or medicines, no electricity. Nothing. All we had was

hope.' Even that disappeared in the midst of the horrors let loose by the murderous passions of the Balkans, as Konjic confessed: 'I lost the best four years of my career, from the age of 22, because I couldn't play. I fought for my country. My football life was ruined.'

'We had sent our women and children away from home as refugees, to escape the fighting. It meant I was there, in my house with my father and brothers, with the bombs coming down. We were scared to go outside, so we stayed at home. But there was nothing to do and all we did was sit and drink.'

'What else could I do? Everywhere around me was bombed and broken. I was always an optimist, always tried to believe I would get away.'

The chance came in 1995, after Konjic was given special permission to leave by the Bosnian army. The transfer fee demanded by FC Sarajevo summed up the heartbreak of his nation.

Konjic added: 'I was sold for food. There was no point in paying cash because money did not mean anything — you couldn't buy anything. The blockades meant the food could not get in and you might need £200 for a few loaves of bread.'

He pounced on the chance to escape. Yet even as he prepared to move to Croatia, where he was eventually to play for NK Zagreb, the trauma continued.

He explained: 'There were still so many army road-blocks. We feared for what might happen, so we tried to find routes to avoid them. I was in Tuzla, trying to get to Osic. It should take 90 minutes but because of the way we had to go, it meant a two-day drive.'

'But it was such a long journey that my driver fell asleep. We smashed into a bus and were sent down a ditch. The car fell 20 metres and turned three somersaults. I smashed the bones in both my arms on the dashboard.'

'My arms were in plaster but I had to play. They only paid me £100 per month but more importantly, they gave me food, which I could send back to my parents in parcels every two months.'

Given all that history, it is little surprise that Konjic was less concerned than new manager Gordon Strachan over the three-week delay before his work permit came through to allow him to make his debut at Tottenham on Saturday.

He added: 'We watch English football and love it. My people still don't understand how it is possible to work that hard every match, to fight for every tackle. When I came here, I didn't know if I would be strong enough.'

After what Konjic has gone through just to survive, there can be no doubting his true strength.

CARRICK BEAT COLERAINE IN IRISH CUP

While much attention midweek was on the big national friendlies, the Irish Cup was also played.

Carrick Rangers' Graham Armstrong scored the winning goal in first round Coca-Cola League Cup tie with Premiership side Coleraine.

Armstrong struck after 63 minutes to give his side a 2-1 lead which they never relinquished despite some late pressure from Kenny Shiels' side.

The home side took the lead after only 15 minutes, Gary Murray producing the impressive finish following excellent work from John McGrath.

Coleraine hit back with keeper Paul Kee at his best to deny Isaac English, but he could do nothing about Stuart Clanachan's well struck free-kick on 51 minutes which flew into the net.

From then on most in the ground, including Glentoran boss Roy Coyle and Linfield counterpart David Jeffrey, probably thought the top flight side would go on to win.

But they didn't reckon on Armstrong's strike from close range after Graeme Arthur's corner.

Troubled Portadown gained a much-needed confidence boosting 4-1 win at home to Dungannon Swifts in the quarter-finals of the Mid-Ulster Cup last night.

Vinny Arkins was on target twice with Richard Clarke and Dwyer Hill also found the net while Jeremy Robinson replied for the visitors.

At the Newry Showgrounds, Glentoran were dominant in a 2-0 success their first against Town this season.

Teenager Sammy Haughey, given possession 22 yards out by winger Gavin Arthur, fired the ball past Newry goalkeeper Kevin McKeown in 21 minutes.

And the 17-year-old scored again six minutes from time connecting with Mark McMenemy's pass before slamming home.

In the other quarter-final at Castlereagh Park, both Ards and Distillery fielded weakened sides, therefore giving no indication as to who might win the First Division promotion race, but a 3-0 victory for Tommy



Zinedine Zidane at Wembley midweek.

Cassidy's side is still a boost.

Goals from Jonathan Prizeman on five minutes and Jonathan Adair, two minutes later gave Ards a dream start with Philip Dykes adding a third on 75.

The Whites lost midfielder Tommy McLroy to a red card six minutes from time.

Eifion Williams scored with his first touch on his debut for Wales in the B international at the snow-swept Racecourse against the Irish.

The Barry Town striker broke the stalemate in the 72nd minute, only 60 seconds after coming off the substitute's bench for a debut made in heaven.

Williams picked up a pass from Carl Robinson to blast an unstoppable 20-yard drive past 'keeper Maik Taylor — the kind of deadly finishing that brought him 57 goals for the League of Wales champions last season and has made him the league's leading marksman this term.

The 25-year-old Williams had a trial with Portsmouth last week and must have impressed a number of scouts in attendance.

John Oster enhanced his chances of a senior Wales recall to the European Championship squad, though he is suspended for next month's game in Switzerland.

On a Racecourse pitch made difficult by a thin layer of snow, the Everton midfielder was involved in some of his side's best attacks before being withdrawn in the second half.

During a first-half of few chances, Oster went close to giving Wales a 25th-minute lead, sprinting on to a pass by Marc Williams to hit a powerful drive that Taylor turned round his near post.

The fiery Oster kept his discipline last night, even when he was brought down by a crude challenge from full-back Brian McGlinchey.

And it was from Oster's curling cross that Kurt Nogan could have put Wales ahead four minutes before the interval.

But the Cardiff-born striker lacked the accuracy that gave him a goal for Preston in their 5-0 victory over Wrexham on the same ground 16 days earlier.

Barry Town wing-back Gary Lloyd hit several dangerous crosses from the left, one of them just eluding former Bangor City attacker Marc Williams, now enjoying his second spell in League football with Halifax.

Some slick Irish approach play produced little until the 55th minute when 'keeper Danny Coyne kept out a sharp effort from impressive striker Glenn Ferguson within minutes of replacing Wales 'keeper Darren Ward.

But Wales made the best attempt to break the deadlock, Marc Williams bursting from midfield to hit a low drive that forced a quality save from Taylor.

TERRORIST THREAT TO ANDY GORAM

Motherwell are ready to leave Andy Goram out of a potentially hostile match against Celtic at Fir Park this week following weekend newspaper reports linking the goalkeeper with an Ulster terror group, reports the Scotsman newspaper.

Security concerns could see Goram left on the sidelines, even though he has denied any connection with the Ulster Volunteer Force. His club have publicly backed him on the matter.

Billy Davies, the Motherwell manager, is expected to discuss the situation with the player and the hierarchy at Motherwell when Goram returns to training today. It is understood Fir Park officials are prepared to drop the former Rangers player for the Celtic match if there is any prospect of attracting further bad publicity by fielding him.

It emerged last night that Motherwell chairman John Boyle sought the advice of the Scottish Premier League chief executive Roger Mitchell before telling Goram he

could stay with the club.

Mitchell revealed that the SPL stepped into the latest Goram scandal after the former Scotland goalkeeper was pictured in a Sunday newspaper holding a flag with the initials UVF on it.

While the SPL is wary of possible damage to the game's image by the controversy and intends to monitor the potential fallout from the affair, it gave Motherwell the final decision.

However, Mitchell refused to rule out taking action if the allegations of Goram having paramilitary links threaten to bring the game into disrepute.

Such fears will undergo their first serious examination when Celtic visit Fir Park for a match televised live by Sky Sports on 21 February.

Any negative publicity in front of a nationwide audience would be extremely damaging for Motherwell and the Scottish game as a whole and therefore the club is considering omitting Goram from the fixture.



The bland Howard Wilkinson ... the English tabloids are already on the attack. See Craig Wilson next page.

Compiled by

UK

Soccer Weekly

COACHES HIT OUT AT NATIONAL FRIENDLY GAMES

Coaches are becoming increasingly frustrated at the international roster taking their players from them, just one of the many problems they encounter during the season. And they are letting their feelings be known to the media.

"I was left with just five first team players to train yesterday and in the week leading up to the fifth round of the FA Cup that's just disgraceful," said the Leeds United boss Dave O'Leary.

"How can you prepare fully for such an important game. It's a joke really."

O'Leary's side, beaten in their last two Premier League outings, took on George Graham's improving Tottenham at Elland Road on the weekend.

"Because of the international calls and a reserve game I was left with just five players - Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, David Hopkin, Alfie Haaland, Lucas Radebe and Harry Kewell - and there is little you can really work on when you have so few players," he added.

George Graham was also deprived of a number of his first team squad but he at least had nine players at his disposal.

Injured Sol Campbell and Darren Anderton were with England, Steffen Iversen and Espen Baardsen with Norway, Alan Nielsen is playing for Denmark, Steffen Freund with

Germany and Ramon Vega with Switzerland.

In addition full-back Stephen Carr would have been with the Republic of Ireland B team but he pulled out with an injury. Unlike Jonathon Woodgate and Alan Smith, he was not made to join up with his country.

Of those in the squad to face United that left Ian Walker, Luke Young, Mauricio Tarrico, Tim Sherwood, Andy Sinton, Les Ferdinand, Chris Armstrong, Ruel Fox and David Ginola at Graham's disposal, although Ginola remains an injury doubt.

Add to this problems of conditions and there are quite severe hassles for managers. For instance, United's Reserves had a wasted journey to Leicester when the Pontins League Premier Division fixture was called off an hour before the scheduled 7pm kick-off because of a frozen Filbert Street pitch.

The postponement was a set-back for Irish full-back Alan Maybury who was short of match practice after recovering from shin problems which have kept him sidelined all season.

United's reserves are not in action again until Tuesday, February 23, when they take on Aston Villa reserves at Elland Road.

Ah, to be a manager.

'CRAZY' CRAIG WILSON'S UK



Hi. My name is Roberta. I love football, gardening and Soccer Weekly. Welcome to the Crazy Craig Wilson column.

You would have thought the British dailies would have waited until the first result came in.

It was never going to be long before the start of the inevitable Howard Wilkinson backlash.

But the Daily Mirror started theirs on the day before the 2-0 defeat by France, and only six days into the new reign.

Leading with the headline "Oh Hod, here we go again", the story line reported comments by Wilko that in his new post, taking a hammering from the press could only be avoided by going into outer space.

But mention of orbit brought new-age Glenn Hoddle to mind, and Wilkinson, out-of-this-world ramblings; put the papers Harry "hatchet" Harris on the attack.

With his picture doctored to look like Spock, the back page report concluded that "Wilko gets mad Hod disease".

After ninety minutes my head was banging. I had the mother of all headaches. It wasn't Harry Kewell's single handed demolition of Portsmouth in the 5-1 FA Cup defeat by Leeds. It was the incessant chanting from the home end. Drums, bugles, rattles, and the hypnotic mantra "Alan Ball's Blue and White Army". It didn't let up despite ball after ball finding the back of Alan Knight's net.

In an article in Britain's biggest selling football monthly, Pompey fans were recently billed as 'the Nutter Patrol' the most mental fans in British football. And despite Portsmouth sitting sixth from bottom of the First Division, and being in serious money trouble (the entire squad is up for sale), their passion only seems to be getting stronger.

Recent weeks have seen reports that several clubs are due for closure. Chester, Crystal Palace, QPR, and Oxford are all under threat of extinction. Football money is becoming concentrated into fewer and fewer hands.

But perhaps all is not lost? North-eastern giants Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Newcastle are examples of clubs who have survived winding up orders in recent years, and on the back of massive public support have rebuilt to become real contenders.

If crowds alone can make a difference, Portsmouth — despite owing money to the bank the builders and the taxman — may be in with a real chance of survival.

No one personifies the Pompey fan better than John Westwood. A friendly antiquarian bookseller by day, on Saturdays he becomes Mr. Portsmouth Football Club. Literally. Because in 1989, John Anthony Westwood changed his name by deed poll and became John Anthony Portsmouth Football Club Westwood.

"I'm just a fan like any other" he says. Don't you believe it!

Brave the atmosphere at Fratton, and you'll recognise Westwood immediately. He's the one in the blue and white top hat, with the long curly blue wig, the blue painted face, and the beer belly. And if you shut your eyes you'll always hear him. Despite being soft spoken in person, you can hear his voice in any crowd. And then there's his bugle.

"I started going to away games in the 1979-80 season, the year I left school" he says. He's missed only five or six games since. He shows me the 17-seater minibus (rego: PFC 84W) which he runs for away games. "It's owned by the bookshop, but I'm a partner in the business" he smiles.

"There's telly, video, and we've taken the seat out of the back to fit the drums in".

Recently Westwood's world was turned upside down by a ban from his beloved Fratton Park. At the game against Grimsby, Westwood led a half-time pitch invasion to protest against financial mismanagement at the club. "On the Monday I woke up thinking, What the hell have I done, that's my whole life down the drain. The phone in the shop didn't stop ringing — newspapers, TV, radio. But the club called me in for a meeting, I apologised, and the ban was lifted".

However Westwood vowed to stay away until the Gregory family, who hold the majority of shares, had quit the club. Martin Gregory has now resigned as chair, the club has been put up for sale, and John Westwood has returned to the cheers of the Fratton End.

"Last year, in manager Alan Ball's words, it was the fans that saved Pompey from relegation. We got an award from the BBC for outstanding support to our club. We get this kind of support and we haven't won anything for thirty years — we've done nothing this passionate support is despite our failures. Imagine if we won something? We could be one of the biggest clubs in the country."

That's what they all say. But could the fans themselves provide a platform for a brighter future? "Oh yeah, I can feel it already. It's a densely populated city on a small island, it's very working class, and there is a weird passion for this club. There's something about Portsmouth. There are 1.3 million people living within 30 miles of the city so the potential is mind-boggling".

Mind-boggling indeed.



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Compiled by

UK

Soccer Weekly

LARSSON YET AGAIN SHOWS HIS CLASS

Henrik Larsson continued his remarkable season as his hat-trick helped Celtic defeat Dunfermline 4-0 and put his side into the quarter-finals of the Scottish Cup.

The Swedish international's second hat-trick in a week took his overall tally to 27 goals in all competitions. He has now found the net in each of his last eight matches.

But, despite the scoreline, the only all-premier league tie in the fourth round was far from easy for Celtic who had to withstand hectic pressure from Dunfermline in the opening 25 minutes.

However, once Larsson broke the deadlock in the 26th minute with a powerful header, the Parkhead crowd of 47,194 knew there was only one winner.

The former Feyenoord player scored again five minutes later from the penalty spot, after Jackie McNamara had been brought down, and he then set up Harald Brattbakk to score with a left-foot shot from 20 metres in the 39th minute.

Larsson killed off Dunfermline with his third goal, a clever lob over goalkeeper Lee Butler in the 41st minute.

But Brattbakk failed to extend the scoreline when he missed a penalty in the 90th minute.

"This is probably the best I have played in my career. At Feyenoord, I had to change position, but here I am settled in one place," Larsson said.

The fourth round failed to match the shocks of the previous round when four premier league sides were knocked out.

Motherwell, who knocked out holders Hearts in the previous round, struggled to overcome second division Stirling Albion at home until teenager Lee McCulloch broke the deadlock in the 61st minute.

Stirling's Eddie Forest made it 2-0 after scoring an own goal in the 88th minute.

St Johnstone, fourth in the premier league, subdued shock specialists Livingston. The second division leaders had gone 26 games unbeaten — the longest run in Britain this season — but goals from Roddy Grant (18th and 60th) and Philip Scott (39th) killed the tie before veteran John Robertson's late consolation for Livingston.

First division side Morton registered the biggest score of the day as they swept aside second division Clyde 6-1 at home.

Kevin Thomas and Kevin Twaddle both scored twice and John Anderson and Owen Archdeacon added further goals.

Falkirk, who reached the final in 1997 and then the semifinals last year, continued their progress with a 2-1 win at Stranraer, thanks to David Moss's double.

Ayr United failed to match the style they produced to surprise Kilmarnock in the last round but they squeezed past third division Albion Rovers with a 77th minute shot from Gary Teale.

Celtic are in danger of losing Phil O'Donnell after a war of words between the player's agent and Fergus McCann, reported the Scottish media.

The highly-rated midfielder now looks set to head to England at the end of the season.

Agent Raymond Sparkes blasted the club's latest offer to O'Donnell, who limped off during Celtic's 4-0 Scottish Cup rout of Dunfermline.

And Sparkes revealed he's been invited south this week to discuss a pre-contract agreement for O'Donnell.

The agent insisted: "We're so far apart from Celtic's valuation that I've had a verbal offer from an English club which is FORTY PER CENT more than Celtic's BEST offer so far. And I haven't even taken it yet!"

"That's because I know Phil has a market value under freedom of contract — and it's even higher than anything put to us in all of our talks with Celtic and other clubs.

"How can Fergus McCann say he's looking out for Celtic's homegrown players then allow that situation to develop?"

"When Mr. McCann got Mark Burchill to sign a new contract he said Celtic weren't only interested in foreign players.

"But does he seriously believe Phil will stay at the club and accept less money simply because he's a lifelong Celtic fan who comes from the West of Scotland? That's not how it works!"

McCann said recently he was confident O'Donnell would stay with the side he joined when Tommy Burns bought him from Motherwell for £1.5million in 1994.

He insisted then: "We've made Phil an attractive offer and hope he'll stay with us."

McCann might be guilty of naivety but the race to sign O'Donnell has also seen more serious crimes.

Sparkes accuses an English club of trying to tap the player behind his back.

And the agent claims he has been approached for an illegal bung by a middle man acting without a licence and claiming to work for another English club!

He blasted: "I've had a week of dealings which have left me feeling dismayed and disgusted.

"If the public knew the sinister side of this business they would get a shock.

"Phil told me about the backdoor approach from England because there is such a strong bond between us.

"I've represented him since he was 17 and he would have turned down Real Madrid rather than go behind my back.

"When big money is available the transfer business gets murky.

"But I'll NEVER do business that way. I'll be up front at all times.

"And that means telling Celtic they'll need to get real if they want to hold on to Phil, because their offer isn't even being considered right now!"

IRISHMAN ADDED TO ENGLAND COACHING LIST



Mark Hughes ... banned yet again.

Northern Ireland's Martin O'Neill was added to the list of likely candidates for the job as England coach as the British media continued to speculate over Glenn Hoddle's successor.

A decision is due soon and caretaker coach Howard Wilkinson and Fulham's Kevin Keegan have been tipped as front-runners.

But the Sunday Telegraph said that O'Neill, the former Northern Ireland international and current Leicester City manager, had been added to the short list by the F.A. after they decided against former incumbents Bobby Robson and Terry Venables.

Keegan, a popular choice among both fans and the media, has ruled himself out because of his commitment to Fulham, although the Sunday Mirror said the club's owner Mohamed Al Fayed had agreed the F.A. could at least talk to Keegan.

Ray Harford is back in business after the worst four months of his life and the biggest mistake of his career.

Derby manager Jim Smith last week ended Harford's self-imposed exile by appointing him coach to fill the gap created by Steve McClaren's departure to Manchester United.

Harford admits: 'I'm a very lucky guy. I didn't think I

would get another job.'

Harford, 54, sparked a fierce backlash by walking out on West Bromwich in December 1997 and then taking the Queens Park Rangers job that turned out to be a poisoned chalice.

West Bromwich fans have not forgiven Harford for quitting The Hawthorns and he said: 'That was the biggest mistake of my life and it's something I bitterly regret to this day.'

Inside 10 months, Harford had saved Albion from relegation and then guided them into the First Division promotion frame before quitting.

The QPR job did not work out, however. Harford said: 'The fans were shouting for Gerry Francis so I told the directors to let him have a go.'

Now Harford, who coached Blackburn to the Premiership title five years ago, has linked up again with Smith, his manager at Colchester nearly 30 years ago.

Harford said: 'Jim's man-management skills are second to none and Derby are a good, honest side.'

The attendance record for an England Under 21 international was smashed at Pride Park in Derby when England played France early last week. With 33,000 fans in attendance this beats the existing 26,000 at Newcastle in 1994 when England beat the Republic of Ireland. What makes it all the more meritorious is that there was no Derby player on either side!

Mark Hughes is on disciplinary probation for the rest of the season after being banned for the fourth time last week.

The Southampton striker was fined £2,000 and suspended for two matches after picking up 14 bookings in 24 games and warned that he will be 'in serious trouble' if he appears before the FA again. That could mean as much as a three-month ban.

An FA spokesman said: 'We have taken into account the nature of the offences and Mark was severely censured. Another three cautions would see him reach 17 bookings. He would clearly be in serious trouble and we might well take a different view. There is no precedent for someone having 17 bookings so it's no good speculating what would happen. The case would be judged on its own merits.'

The 35-year-old Wales international has promised to change his ways but admits it will be hard. He said: 'I have stayed in the game so long because I have a certain something managers like - my will to win and commitment to the cause.'

'The game has changed and I've not changed as much as I could. I've been trying hard. It's difficult but I have to make a conscious effort.'

PLAY IT AGAIN WENGER WINS OVER FANS AND MEDIA

Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger proved his class as a human being by handing a replay to Sheffield United after a controversial goal ended the Northerners' Cup run.

The Cup holders had defeated their First Division visitors 2-1, but the winning goal, from Marc Overmars after 76 minutes, provoked scenes of chaos and a walk-off by the United players, led by manager Steve Bruce.

United expected the ball to be returned to them after forward Lee Morris had received treatment for an injury.

Instead, Nigeria international Nwankwu Kanu raced down the flank and crossed for Marc Overmars to side-foot the winning goal.

It was clearly ungentlemanly conduct by substitute Kanu and Arsenal manager Wenger immediately tabled the replay idea to angry United officials.

The FA gave their approval and the replay goes ahead on February 23.

Wenger said: 'The best thing we can do is offer to replay the game here. It was a controversial goal and we feel it was not right.'

We didn't want to cheat. Kanu didn't want to cheat. We have been the victims in the past. We know it was not right.'

A series of hurried telephone calls between FA officials granted Wenger's request. FA spokesman Steve Double said: 'It's an unprecedented situation but we're happy to agree to Arsenal's request and, like everyone else in football, we welcome the sporting gesture made by Arsene Wenger.'

Bruce added, 'We deserve another crack. What happened was unsavoury and unjustifiable.'

'Half the Arsenal players — men like Steve Bould, Nigel Winterburn and David Seaman, people I've played against for the past 10 years — apologised. David Dein and Arsene Wenger also have my respect for offering a replay.'

'I don't think they wanted to win like this. I was angry and I was trying to take my players off the field. It was in protest but I was also trying to sort it out.'

'I couldn't understand why the referee just couldn't take the play back. It was ungentlemanly conduct. To me, that should have been a free-kick.'

The controversy arose when Arsenal midfielder Ray Parlour took a throw-in after United goal-keeper Alan Kelly had put the ball out of play to allow Morris to be treated for an injury

sustained in the Arsenal penalty area.

The United players expected the ball to be returned to them — but Kanu, Arsenal's £4 million acquisition from Inter Milan, was clearly unfamiliar with a nicely played out on British grounds.

Immediately after Overmars had scored, United's team raced towards the little Dutchman like a lynch mob. Arsenal players sprinted to his rescue.

There was pandemonium everywhere as players exchanged insults and pushed one another while referee Peter Jones watched in dismay.

He consulted his assistant on the touchline but decided he had to award the goal.

Bruce, accompanied by his assistant, John Deehan, arrived on the perimeter of the pitch to remonstrate with the officials.

As confusion reigned, the Sheffield players congregated in one group, and for a moment, looked as if they were going to leave the pitch.



Sheffield United players after the controversial goal at Highbury.

On the terraces, the 5,000-strong contingent of supporters from Sheffield chanted 'Bruce, Bruce, take them off'.

As the debate raged on the touchline, the Arsenal team stood around in bemusement. Their fans were strangely silent. Finally, referee Jones managed to persuade the United players to resume the match, fully eight minutes after Overmars had scored.

Match reports next page.

Compiled by and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

FA Cup &

Premier League highlights

SHEFF. WED. V CHELSEA

Chelsea defeated Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough, progressing to the quarterfinals of the FA Cup.

The visitors had the better of the opening half, which started brightly but faded badly as the interval approached.

Benito Carbone, at the heart of the Wednesday attack, went close after three minutes when he volleyed across the face of goal from a Dejan Stefanovic cross.

Chelsea answered with a Vialli header as both sides committed to attack in an attempt to secure the vital opening goal.

Chelsea squandered the best opportunity of the half after seven minutes.

Jody Morris split the Wednesday defence with a superb ball for Dan Petrescu, but the Romanian international put the ball into the side netting when he should have found the target.

Neither side produced much invention for the remainder of the half. Italian Gianfranco Zola and Nigerian Celestine Babayaro both had efforts from long range, while Jody Morris almost capitalised on some neat buildup but shot straight at Wednesday goalkeeper Kevin Pressman.

Wednesday failed to ignite and repetitively squandered possession. Carbone drifted in and out of the game as both he and strike partner Andy Booth were caught offside too often.

Chelsea raised the tempo at the start of the second period, forcing Wednesday onto the back foot through their intricate passing and movement.

Zola, Morris and Roberto di Matteo produced some neat buildup as Chelsea dominated both territory and possession with Wednesday struggling to move the ball out of their own half.

Carbone shot just over from a rare Wednesday break before Morris and Petrescu again troubled the home side as the hour mark approached. However, neither side seemed to possess the cutting edge to make the breakthrough.

Wednesday came back into the game with 20 minutes to play, seemingly having drawn the Chelsea sting.

After 73 minutes Wednesday fashioned their best opportunity of the match.

Dutch international Wim Jonk set up Niclas Alexanderson 12 yards out, only to see him fire a powerful shot straight at de Goey and then scuff a second effort as the ball rebounded off the goalkeeper's legs.

With 15 minutes to play, Petter Rudi and Carbone threatened again, but failed to trouble de Goey.

Five minutes from time, just as the game seemed destined for a goalless stalemate, substitute Bjarne Goldbaek found di Matteo with a penetrative far post cross and the Italian international made no mistake with a firm header past Pressman.

Andy Booth went close for Wednesday in stoppage time, and then Goldbaek almost scored following a surging run and shot as Chelsea held the advantage to take their place in the next round.

HUDDERSFIELD V DERBY COUNTY

Huddersfield Town came from behind at the McAlpine Stadium to earn a 2-2 draw and an FA Cup fifth round replay with Derby County.

Huddersfield goalkeeper Nico Vaesen was in inspirational form, pulling off a string of fine saves. The lanky Belgian denied Derby strikers Deon Burton and Dean Sturridge time and again in a pulsating tie.

The game burst into life after 34 minutes when Jacob Laursen directed Francesco Baiano's drive over the bar. Sturridge then hit the side-netting and directed another header on target as Derby began to take control.

The home side took the lead on 42 minutes, against the run of play, when midfielder Chris Beech robbed Russell Hoults. County hit straight back but found Vaesen blocking their way as he saved Sturridge's header and Burton's close range shot to bring the half to a close.

The second half was an exciting affair. Simon Baldry's volley provoked a stunning save from Hoults, but it was Derby who were in control. Sturridge spurned two opportunities and Horacio Carbonari sent a free-kick whistling wide as The Rams grew in confidence.

The pressure paid off on 55 minutes when Jamaican international Burton rose to head home his eighth goal in ten games. Four minutes later Derby took the lead. Former England full back Tony Dorigo sent Vaesen the wrong way from the spot after Jon Dyson had fouled Sturridge.

Huddersfield refused to give up, though. Delroy Facey replaced Darren Edmondson and within two minutes he used his pace to force a corner.

Carbonari headed the ball across the face of his own goal, and Marcus Stewart popped up at the far post to head home his 20th goal of the season.

Both sides pressed for a winner. Burton saw his shot tipped over by Vaesen and as the referee prepared to blow the final whistle midfielder Lee Carsley unleashed a 25-yard shot, but once again Vaesen was there to deny him.

Fulham's dream of beating Manchester United in the F.A. Cup came to an end when they were beaten 1-0 in a hard-fought fifth-round tie at Old Trafford. Chelsea are now drawn to play the Red Devils in what should be a classic.

A lone Andy Cole strike in the 26th minute was enough to sink the second division side and take the premier league leaders into the quarter-finals where they will face Chelsea in a mouth-watering tie.

In the other outstanding fifth-round tie at St. James Park, last year's losing finalists Newcastle were unable

to get past Blackburn goalkeeper John Filan and had to settle for a 0-0 draw and a replay at Ewood Park on February 24. The winners will play Everton in the next round.

In spite of their win it was a frustrating day for Manchester United, who showed little of the exciting form which has made them the top side in the country.

"It was a difficult game," said United's disappointed coach Alex Ferguson.

"I suppose cup football can go that way. A team from the second division can be inspired by coming to Old Trafford while for us it was just another game."

"We never raised the tempo enough, to wear them down but you have got to give credit to Fulham for the fight they put up."

Fulham coach Kevin Keegan was also in a frustrated mood as his side failed to follow their heroic wins over premier league sides Southampton and Aston Villa in earlier rounds.

"I would have enjoyed that a lot of more if we had got a goal," said Keegan. "But we gave them a game and they will know they have been in a game."

In spite of playing against a Fulham side robbed by injury of two of its more experienced players, Paul Bracewell and Paul Peschisolidi, United struggled to make an early impact and had to wait until the 26th minute before making the breakthrough.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer sent in a cross for Cole whose shot deflected wide of keeper Maik Taylor and into the net.

A minute later Fulham might have been level only for England international Gary Neville to pull off a daring tackle on Dirk Lehmann as he shaped to shoot inside the penalty area.

Fulham battled hard in the second half and it took a fine save from Peter Schmeichel in the 67th minute to deny John Salako.

Dwight Yorke twice went close in the final stages of the game with a header and a volley which Taylor kept out with brilliant saves.

At St. James Park, Blackburn had the first opportunity to take the lead in the 13th minute when Ashley Ward's 25 metre strike cannoned back off the cross bar. A minute later Newcastle's Stephen Glass saw his shot from just outside the penalty also ricochet back off the bar.

Nolberto Solano and Temuri Ketsbaia also went close for Newcastle in the first half while Glass had two further chances after the break. But Blackburn held on for the replay.

CHARLTON V LIVERPOOL (PREMIERSHIP)

Charlton Athletic secured their second successive premierships victory with a 1-0 win over Liverpool at The Valley.

The Addicks started confidently following Monday's 2-0 success over Wimbledon, their first league victory in 13 matches.

While showing plenty of spirit, the home side could not make the breakthrough in a dour first half. Swedish striker Martin Pringle came closest when he headed over from close range after Liverpool had failed to clear a right-wing corner.

Otherwise Charlton were restricted to a couple of long-range efforts. Neil Redfearn disappointed when he was released down an inside left channel by Pringle, dragging his shot badly across the face of goal.

At the other end, however, Charlton were grateful for Simon Royce's athleticism. The goalkeeper flew to his right in the 36th minute to turn a Steve McManaman volley round the post.

Andy Hunt went close for Charlton just after the break and Robbie Fowler smashed over after McManaman created a chance with good work down the Liverpool left.

The introduction of new Charlton signing John Barnes brought rapturous applause from both sets of fans, but had little to do with the incidents that would decide the game.

After 68 minutes, Liverpool were reduced to ten men following the dismissal of Jamie Carragher for elbowing Pringle under the nose of referee Mike Reed. Just two minutes later, veteran midfielder Keith Jones put Charlton in front with a scrappy goal.

Liverpool failed to clear a John Robinson cross, and after a couple of ricochets, Jones was on hand to rifle the ball home from close range.

Alan Curbishley's side then piled on the pressure, taking full advantage of the extra man. Liverpool goalkeeper David James denied Pringle, Hunt, and Carl Tyler as the home side surged forward in search of a second goal.

Rigobert Song produced a saving tackle to deny Pringle and Mark Kinsella had a shot saved by James at the near post as Charlton held on for three more precious points at the end of a dramatic week.



Robbie Fowler ... the picture tells the story.

WEST HAM V FOREST (PREMIERSHIP)

Nottingham Forest find themselves four points adrift at the foot of the premierships table following their 2-1 defeat by West Ham United at Upton Park.

Still reeling from last week's 4-0 home defeat at the hands of Arsenal, West Ham left out new boys Marc Vivien Foe and Scott Minto in a bid to secure their first victory of the year.

Forest also showed the effects of their mauling at the hands of Manchester United last weekend, as both sides looked defensively vulnerable.

Hammers centrebacks Rio Ferdinand and Ian Pearce both squandered possession at the back, and Forest goalkeeper Dave Beasant mysteriously fired a clearance at defender Jon Olav Hjelde's back. Mercifully, the rebound fell to safety.

While both defences stuttered, West Ham produced some good attacks, using the wings effectively as they stretched the Forest back line.

After fifteen minutes, the Hammers should have taken the lead through just such a move.

Paolo Di Canio and the enterprising Stan Lazaridis combined well on the left as the winger outstripped American veteran John Harkes.

The ensuing cross found England Under-21 captain Frank Lampard unmarked in the six-yard box, yet he nervously poked wide.

Just a minute later Di Canio himself missed out as he hoisted the ball yards over following an inch-perfect pass from Steve Lomas.

Twenty minutes elapsed before the goals came. Again attacking down their left, Lazaridis played the ball through for Eyal Berkovic to chase, the Israeli international beating the offside trap.

His byline cross found Pearce alone beyond Beasant and the defender duly converted the chance.

Just five minutes later West Ham claimed their second. Di Canio's pacy run up the right wing provided Trevor Sinclair with the opportunity to cut the ball back from the byline. This time Lampard was free in the box and he made no mistake.

Yet although the first half was undoubtedly theirs, a complacent West Ham were fortunate to hang on to their lead for 90 minutes.

Forest boss Ron Atkinson belatedly chose to introduce Steve Chettle and Nigel Quashie and they breathed new life into the visitors.

Rather than waste possession with speculative long-range efforts, Forest pushed forward in numbers and dominated the second period.

Following opportunities for Pierre van Hooijdonk, who fired wide from the edge of the box after 51 minutes, and a carbon copy Neil Shipperley effort 10 minutes later, Forest deservedly pulled a goal back.

An 84th-minute van Hooijdonk free-kick found Hjelde unmarked and his eight-yard header was always goalbound.

However, Forest could not take a point from the game and their cause is beginning to look hopeless as they hover above the trap-door back to the Nationwide League.

Compiled and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

FA Cup

ARSENAL V SHEFFIELD UTD

In an unprecedented move, Arsenal and Sheffield United will replay their FA Cup fifth round tie despite a result having been achieved.

The Football Association have sanctioned Arsene Wenger's offer of a replay on the basis that the 2-1 victory was achieved in unsporting fashion.

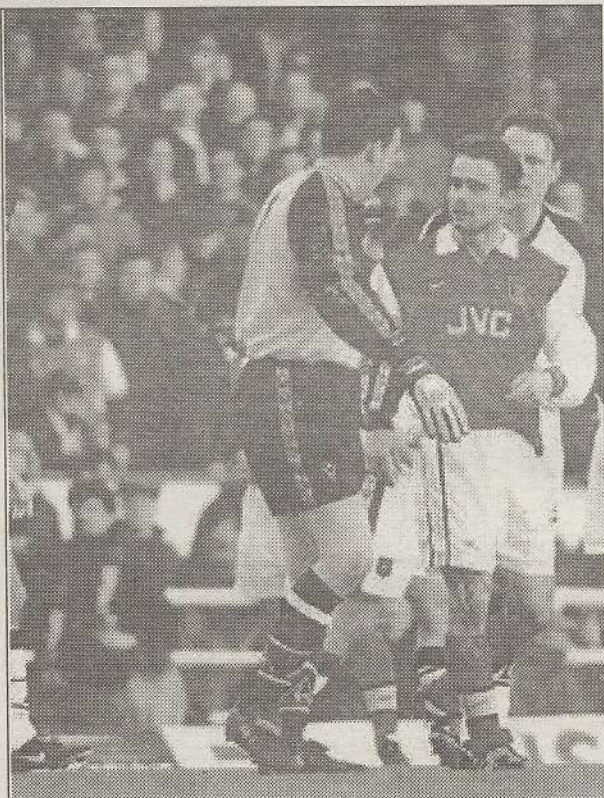
Arsenal's controversial winning goal came after 76 minutes, scored by Dutch winger Mark Overmars. Midfielder Ray Parlour was returning the ball to United goalkeeper Alan Kelly, who had kicked the ball out of play so that a colleague could receive medical attention.

However, debutant striker Nwankwo Kanu chased down the throw-in and crossed for Overmars who slotted the ball into an empty net. Kanu claims he was unaware of the premiership tradition.

The goal inspired loud protests from the visiting supporters and there were angry scenes on the touchline as the United management team complained to the referee in disgust. The game only restarted eight minutes later.

However, after the match, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said that his team felt embarrassed by the incident and offered to replay the game. Both Sheffield United and the FA promptly accepted the offer.

Until the controversial incident the match had been a tame affair, the Cup holders taking the lead on the half hour when Patrick Vieira rose highest to glance home a Dennis Bergkamp free-kick from the left.



Overmars faces the wrath of the United players after the controversial goal, sparked by Kanu.

The Blades equalised four minutes into the second half when Brazilian Marcello rose high above Arsenal defender Gilles Grimandi to direct Paul Devlin's cross beyond David Seaman from close range.

The replay is scheduled for February 24 at Highbury.

Just imagine the reception poor Kanu will receive from the Sheffield United faithful.



Bergkamp and Sheffield United's Curtis Woodhouse.

BARNESLEY V BRISTOL ROVERS

Barnsley overcame a determined challenge from Bristol Rovers at Oakwell to progress to the quarterfinals of the FA Cup.

Rovers made a bright start and threatened to upset their First Division hosts with Jamie Cureton and Jason Roberts both going close in the opening minutes.

Midfielder David Lees then forced a super save from Tony Bullock with a splendid curling free-kick from 25 yards.

Barnsley rocked the visitors though, taking the lead with two goals in six minutes just before the interval.

After 38 minutes Bruce Dyer burst into the area and cut the ball back for Craig Hignett. The striker controlled the ball well as he drove home his shot.

A minute before half-time, Mike Sheron, making his debut for the Yorkshire side, fed a superb pass into the path of Hignett who again showed composure as he hammered home Barnsley's second.

Seconds later, Sheron might have added a third but

Lee Jones produced a fine save to deny his powerful, curling shot.

Backed by 5000 vocal travelling fans, Rovers raised the tempo again after the restart. However, when Dyer scored a third for Barnsley after 63 minutes, the game ended as a contest.

Sheron produced a neat chip over the static Rovers defence and Dyer beat the offside trap, darted in and volleyed home.

Hignett completed his hat-trick 15 minutes from time when he reacted quickly after Jones had blocked Dyer's shot.

Rovers managed to grab a consolation goal six minutes before the end.

Roberts galloped in as Matty Appleby and keeper Tony Bullock dithered before clipping home his shot, providing some reward for the enthusiasm of the visiting fans.

LEEDS V TOTTENHAM

George Graham took his Tottenham Hotspur side to Elland Road on Saturday, coming face to face with his former right-hand man David O'Leary, now in charge of Leeds United.

The sides battled to a 1-1 draw, and Leeds now face the prospect of a trip to White Hart Lane for a replay to determine who progresses to the quarterfinals of the FA Cup.

It was a match of few opportunities, particularly for Leeds. Strikers Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Alan Smith had a difficult afternoon, with Sol Campbell outstanding again in the Tottenham defence.

Meanwhile, Lucas Radebe led Leeds by example, completely snuffing out the threat from Frenchman David Ginola.

Spurs created the first opportunity of the match. Their recent \$10 million signing from Blackburn Rovers, Tim Sherwood, sent Les Ferdinand clear. The England striker should have buried the ball, but mishit his shot, allowing Ian Harte time to hook the ball off the line.

Norwegian striker Steffen Iversen should then have put the Londoners ahead, but he could only scoop the ball into the crowd when presented with a gaping net just six yards from goal.

Eight minutes after the interval, Graham managed to control his emotions as Spurs opened the scoring. Sherwood flicked the ball over Leeds goalkeeper Nigel Martyn and into the net to stun the home crowd.

However, Harte spared the Leeds blushes with a sweetly struck 73rd-minute equaliser. The strike was delivered from outside the penalty box with his less favoured right foot. The goal will have pleased Harte, who found himself largely out of the Leeds starting lineup while Graham was manager.



Les and Lee: Ferdinand and Bowyer at Elland Road.

The match proved a full-blooded cup tie, with referee Neil Barry struggling to keep control. He collected the names of six players, including four from Tottenham, but failed to take effective action against Ferdinand for a cynical challenge on Martyn.

Leeds were also angered by the treatment dished out to their young Australian Harry Kewell, who was repeatedly stopped in his tracks by fair means or foul.

EVERTON V COVENTRY

Everton hardly looked a relegation-threatened outfit at Goodison Park, defeating Coventry City 2-1 to move into the next round of the FA Cup.

Everton manager Walter Smith has turned to teenager Francis Jeffers to provide the cutting edge following a shocking goalscoring record this season, particularly at home.

The young striker, making his home debut, responded well as he led the way with the opening goal on 20 minutes.

When Nicky Barmby won a header on the edge of the Coventry box, the ball fell kindly for Jeffers, who skipped past Richard Shaw and fired in a low

shot which clipped goalkeeper Magnus Hedman's boots before finding the back of the net.

Jeffers might have had another on 38 minutes after being put clean through by Barmby, but he blasted the ball wide from 12 yards.

Coventry's best first half chance fell to the dangerous Darren Huckerby on 39 minutes, but he saw his thunderous 25-yard effort magnificently tipped over the bar by Everton goalkeeper Thomas Myhre.

The home side started quickly after the interval, with Jeffers threatening once again. Olivier Dacourt played him in on 48 minutes with a high ball over the static Coventry defence, but Hedman managed to palm away his fierce drive.

Coventry never gave up and should have equalised on 72 minutes when Huckerby fed an unmarked Noel Whelan down the right, but his effort travelled inches wide of the left-hand post.

It was another Everton youngster who sealed this well deserved victory five minutes later. Don Hutchison found John Oster down the left, and his sweetly hit 25-yard piledriver went straight through Hedman's legs.

Coventry pulled one back on 84 minutes when skipper Gary McAllister, seemingly oblivious to Everton's defensive wall just eight yards away, lofted the ball into the top right hand corner of the net leaving Myhre with no chance.

Everton enter the quarterfinal draw a rejuvenated side. Smith will now be trying to inspire his team to similar heights in their forthcoming premiership matches as they struggle to move clear of the relegation zone.



GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?